

Encountering Others, Understanding Ourselves in Medieval and Early Modern Thought

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Edited by Heikki Haara and Koen Stapelbroek

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Encountering Others, Understanding Ourselves in Medieval and Early Modern Thought



Edited by
Nicolas Faucher and Virpi Mäkinen

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Cover image: Detail of a miniature of blemmyae, a monstrous race of men with their heads on their chests. Origin: France, N. (Rouen). © The British Library Board, Royal 15 E VI f. 21v Blemmyae.

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Acknowledgements

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Nicolas Faucher and Virpi Mäkinen
Helsinki, July 2022

Introduction

1 Understanding the Past without Omitting Injustice

At Saint Peter's Cathedral in the Vatican, on the *Day of Pardon* (March 12, 2000) during the international Jubilee Year, Pope John Paul II celebrated a mass in which he, together with cardinals (as representatives of the Roman Curia), confessed "the sins of the past" in accordance with an authentic "purification of memory" and asked for forgiveness "on the path of true conversion."¹ After this general confession, the pope and the cardinals confessed more particular sins of the past, each confession ending with a prayer from the pope. Among these sins were those committed in the service of truth by "men of the Church" who "in the name of faith and morals, have sometimes used methods" against the ideal of the Gospel "in the solemn duty of defending the truth." The pope, for his part, confessed that "in certain periods of history Christians have at times given in to intolerance and have not been faithful to the great commandment of love, sullyng in this way the face of the Church." The third prayer concerned the confession of sins that have harmed the unity of the body of Christ, stating that believers "have [...] opposed one another, become divided, and have mutually condemned one another and fought against one another." The fourth confession of sins concerned the sufferings endured by the people of Israel throughout history; and the fifth the sins that Christians have committed in actions against love, peace, the rights of peoples, and against respect for cultures and religions. In this part, forgiveness was asked for "the words and attitudes

¹ As regards the reconciliation processes, in 1999 the International Theological Commission published a document entitled *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past* (1999), on which the confessions were based. The document is available at: https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000307_memory-reconc-itc_en.html (accessed 20 May 2022). The document lists past and present problems in its first part. The second part offers a biblical approach, and the third part develops the theological foundations of the subject. The fourth part, "Historical Judgement and Theological Judgement," deals with the interpretation of history and the nature of a historical investigation with a theological evaluation. The fifth part, "Ethical Discernment," includes a treatment of different themes, such as the division of Christians, the use of force in the service of the truth, Christians and Jews, as well as the responsibility for the evils of today. The sixth and last part proposes pastoral and missionary perspectives.

caused by pride, by hatred, by the desire to dominate others, by enmity towards members of other religions and towards the weakest groups in society, such as immigrants and itinerants.” For his part, the pope confessed that “Christians [...] have violated the rights of ethnic groups and peoples, and shown contempt for their cultures and religious traditions.” The sixth apology concerned the sins “against the dignity of women, who are too often humiliated and marginalized, and the unity of the human race” in which the pope confessed that “Christians have been guilty of attitudes of rejection and exclusion, consenting to acts of discrimination on the basis of racial and ethnic differences.” The section ends with the confession of sins in relation to the fundamental rights of people, “especially [...] minors who are victims of abuse, or the poor, the alienated, the disadvantaged.”²

In Western historiography, Christianity has been accused of being perhaps the most intolerant of all great world religions, and medieval and early modern societies have been seen as singularly cruel and violent, especially on account of crusades, conquests, persecution, and inquisitions.³ The reasons are manifold: from human beings’ tendency to commit evil to the self-identification of the Catholic Church as a holy and infallible institution outside of which there is no salvation.⁴ Being a Christian meant being baptized, an act which signaled the birth of a new nation. In baptism, the old barbaric pagan past was washed away in a single moment, and a new person was born. Thus, being a Christian also meant belonging to a group of the (potentially) saved, and therefore conver-

2 For the Universal Prayer on the Day of Pardon, see https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/documents/ns_lit_doc_20000312_prayer-day-pardon_en.html (accessed 20 May 2002). For the interpretation of the Universal Prayer, see Mikko Ketola, “Teologian ja politiikan ristipaineissa: Katolisen kirkon anteeksipyyntöt,” in *Voiko historiaa hyvittää? Historiallisten vääryyksien korjaaminen ja anteeksiantaminen*, ed. Jan Löfström (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2012), 98–117; David I. Kertzer, “A Cautious Apology, but It’s a Start,” *The New York Times*, 16 March 2000; Peter Steinfeld, “Reflecting on a Papal Apology with Few Precedents in View of an Abiding Tension,” *The New York Times*, 18 March 2000. For the acts of forgiveness during the papacy of Pope John Paul II, see also Luigi Accattoli, *When a Pope Asks Forgiveness: The Mea Culpas of John Paul II* (New York: Alba House, 1998).

3 Robert I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007, 2nd ed.); Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Michael W. Dunne and Susan Gottlöber, eds., *Tolerance and Concepts of Otherness in Medieval Philosophy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022).

4 See e.g., Judith Lichtenberg, *Distance Strangers: Ethics, Psychology and Global Poverty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University of Press, 2013); Virpi Mäkinen, Jonathan Robinson, Pamela Slotte, and Heikki Haara, eds., *Rights at the Margins: Historical, Philosophical and Legal Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

sion to Christianity meant transformation into a person for whom the possibility of salvation in the afterlife was open. Early Christians adopted the originally Jewish practice of referring collectively to all peoples who did not share their faith by using such terms as ‘pagan’ and ‘gentile.’ This exclusive terminology of othering ‘us’ from ‘them’ based on religious reasons remained more or less standard from the medieval period until the early modern era. The divisions within Christianity were also usually due to faith and thus, doctrinal disagreements. Those who departed from the true faith and doctrine (explicated by church authorities) were condemned as ‘heretics.’⁵ Political differences between Christian groups were often conceptualized in religious terms by both sides of the debate, and it was not uncommon for politically dissenting groups to be labeled religious heretics.

As the book cover illustrates, dehumanization has been one way of justifying harming, abusing, violating, or killing others, often non-believers but also heretics inside the Church. In addition to illustrative representations, dehumanization was also manifested in figurative language that was nurtured by propagandistic writings and stereotypes. Heretics were described, for example, as carrying infectious diseases and indigenous people as monkeys. There were also several other ways in which individuals and groups were constructed as strange and divorced from the community of those who supposedly had truth and goodness on their side.⁶

2 Understanding Ourselves in Encountering Others

By ‘othering’ we refer to a process in which differently perceived people or groups are defined as worse than and as inferior to how the perceivers see themselves. This concerns confirming and defining one’s identity with the help of a counterpart. It may be the question of the majority’s power over minorities although minorities themselves can create their own identities by othering other groups. There were, of course, reasons for othering people apart from religious grounds, for instance, differences in the physical (e.g., gender, skin color, facial

5 Originally a neutral Greek term *hairesis* that denoted ‘choice,’ ‘systems of principles,’ and/or a particular set of philosophical opinions.

6 Simon C. Thompson, *Strangers at the Gate! Multidisciplinary Explorations of Communities, Borders, and Othering in Medieval Western Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2021); Marja-Leena Hänninen, ed., *Vieras, outo, vihollinen: Toiseus antiikista uuden ajan alkuun* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2013). The volume looks at othering from antiquity to the early modern period from the viewpoint of history, languages, literature, art, religious studies, law, and culture.

features) and cultural (e.g., primitiveness) sense. Both have been viewed from the perspective of Western people and culture, holding it to be superior to others.⁷

Notwithstanding the prevailing representation of Christianity, recent scholarship has shown that ideas on toleration and recognition are also to be found in medieval and early modern sources.⁸ In these narratives, human dignity and diversity were accepted and defended – and this concerned not only faithful Christians but also non-Christians. These studies have also bolstered our knowledge of interfaith encounters in early history. Studying and valuing such encounters does not contradict but complements taking responsibility for others and seeking reconciliation and forgiveness.⁹ These processes of self-criticism and self-understanding are needed to ensure that the atrocities committed never happen again.¹⁰

The main aim of this volume is to highlight the significance of understanding ourselves when encountering others.¹¹ The mere fact that there are other human beings and the kind of obligation this creates for each and every one of us makes for a kind of encounter with otherness. Mostly, though, the ‘others’ studied here are, or might be, objects of toleration within a given political com-

⁷ The emergence of the study of the “global” Middle Ages has also widened historiography. See e.g., Julia McClure, “A New Politics of the Middle Ages: A Global Middle Ages for a Global Modernity,” *History Compass* 13:11 (2015): 610–619.

⁸ See e.g., Rainer Forst, *Toleration in Conflict: Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2013, 2nd ed.); Cary Nederman, *Worlds of Difference: European Discourses of Toleration, c.1100–c.1550* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West*; Risto Saarinen, *Recognition and Religion: A Historical and Systematic Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Maijastina Kahlos, Heikki J. Koskinen and Ritva Palmén, eds., *Religious Recognition: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

⁹ Such reconciliation processes started within the Catholic Church during the twentieth century, especially under the initiative of Pope John Paul II. See e.g., Benedictus XVI, *Pastoral Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholics of Ireland*, 19 March 2020; ITC (International Theological Commission), *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*. See also Accattoli, *When a Pope Asks Forgiveness*.

¹⁰ See e.g., Allan Megill, *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error: A Contemporary Guide to Practice* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007); John Torpey, ed., *Politics and the Past: On Repairing Historical Injustices* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); Charles Griswold, *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Janna Thompson, *Taking Responsibility for the Past: Reparation and Historical Justice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002).

¹¹ Chris Jones, Conor Kostick and Klaus Oschema, eds., *Making the Medieval Relevant: How Medieval Studies Contribute to Improving Our Understanding of the Present* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020).

munity. This would include members of other religions, like Judaism and Islam in Christian societies, but also members of Jewish, Muslim, or minority Christian communities within greater Christian communities. Regarding internal disagreements between communities that see themselves as Christians, we focus on disagreements between Eastern and Western Christianity, heretical movements, and the different sects within radical Reformation. In addition, we also consider early modern politics.

Another aim of this volume is to look at medieval and early modern ideas on toleration. Even though there are already a number of studies that focus on this subject in specific periods, we argue that paying attention to the identification of ourselves as a key factor in our attitudes toward others will also offer new perspectives in understanding the processes of toleration. The volume will ultimately inform the reader concerning the nature of religious toleration, including beliefs and doctrines, altruistic ideas, and even social emotions, as well as the self-definitions of religious communities when encountering and defining otherness in different ways.

As distinct from Cary Nedermann's *Worlds of Difference: European Discourses of Toleration, c.1100–c.1550*, where four Western theologians (John of Salisbury, William Rubruck, Nicholas of Cusa, and Domingo de Las Casas) from the twelfth century to the sixteenth century are studied, we offer perspectives on both Eastern and Western Christian traditions in addition to Judaism and Islam from the seventh century to the seventeenth century. This rectifies the scholarly tradition of studying Western and Eastern Christianities in separate camps, in which the history of Eastern Europe is studied under the field of 'Byzantine' studies.

In his *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West*, Perez Zagorin argues that as a common attitude towards otherness, religious persecution should even be considered the norm in the medieval era. As the chapters in this volume maintain, the period also shows examples of religious toleration, and even of recognition of others. Thus, some modes of religious toleration can be traced back to the early medieval period. Religious toleration also remained a relatively constant topic among theologians throughout the Middle Ages up to the late seventeenth century.

Methodologically, the chapters are based on close readings of the historical sources from the point of view of different disciplines, from history to philosophy and from theology to cultural studies. Written by experts on medieval and early modern corporuses, they outline and reveal many different kinds of encounters with otherness, some individual and concrete, others abstract and theoretical. The chapters offer a sample of examples of how discussions on a diversity of linguistic, philosophical, religious, theological, legal, political, and social aspects

of human existence display a variety of intellectual approaches among medieval and modern thinkers that belies the often simplistic images that are given of their views.

The volume is divided into three main parts according to the level of generality of the figure of the ‘other’ that is considered, and the different kinds of religious otherness they examine. Part I, *Evil*, deals with religious otherness that is considered evil and ought to be rejected, such as heresy and malevolent, demonic entities. At the same time, it tells us something of what we are. Part II, *Toleration*, considers identity, toleration, and mutual recognition created by the existence of religious or ethnic otherness in a given social religious or political community, and the processes by which a generalized other comes to be at least tolerated, or accepted and recognized as such, even when differences may seem at first unsurpassable. Part III, *Altruism*, deals with attitudes and behaviors that benefit others, regardless of their motives. This part also deals with ‘subsistence’ rights, justice, and social emotions as well as the moral obligations that the very existence of other human beings, whatever their characteristics, creates for a community. We believe that these conceptual distinctions clearly tell us something about different ways of defining otherness and defining oneself. The chapters of the volume all engage in specific ways with these conceptual distinctions to contribute to shaping a new understanding of these acts of definition.

3 Part I: Evil

According to the largely accepted definition given by English theologian Robert Grosseteste (1175–1253), “a heresy is an opinion chosen by human perception contrary to Holy Scripture, publicly avowed and obstinately defended.” On the one side, there were heretics with their dissident beliefs and practices; on the other side, there was the Church, which defined the orthodox doctrine and condemned dissidents.¹² In the medieval period, heresy was often believed to be the work of the devil and was feared as an infectious disease would be. Such a wicked and contagious ‘disease’ had to be excluded from Christian society and the Church had to protect orthodox doctrine and its purity.

¹² Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992, 2nd ed.), 4–5. See also Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane, *A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011); Faustine Harang, *La torture au Moyen Âge: Parlement de Paris, XIVe–XVe siècles* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2017).

In the first chapter, “The Worst of All Heresies: Polemical Responses to Waldensianism ca. 1200–1400,” Reima Välimäki deals with one of the longest-lived dissident spiritual groups in the high Middle Ages, the Waldensians. The Waldensians were both persecuted and declared heretical, but as Välimäki shows, their teachings followed the central articles of faith and sacraments and had only a few differences compared to the doctrine of the twelfth-century Church. The chapter focuses on the various strategies used by polemicists against the Waldensians from the beginning of the thirteenth century to the late Middle Ages. Among these strategies were demonizing rumors about supposedly devil-worshipping heretics. Other strategies subtly downplayed the orthodox elements in Waldensian Christianity and underlined the heretical nature of their movement. This chapter serves to provide a precise example of how self-identifying orthodox Christians defined themselves against those they perceived to be heterodox.

In his chapter “Richard FitzRalph on the Religious Other: Avignonian Intersections between Christians, Muslims, and Tatars,” Michael W. Dunne deals with the largely unexplored *Summa de Quaestionibus Armenorum* of Richard FitzRalph (ca. 1300–1360), who was a theologian and Norman Irish Archbishop of Armagh during the fourteenth century. FitzRalph’s *Summa* became an influential work on Muslim doctrine and was quoted by a variety of authors from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. The *Summa* did not only discuss problems between Christianity and Islam but also the relationships between Eastern and Western Churches. For FitzRalph, the idea of grace-based dominion meant that only the predestinated whom God had given special grace through the pope were among the saved. This was a strong weapon in the othering of people. The chapter explores FitzRalph’s encounters with otherness in Ireland and Avignon, and his reflections on some associated questions of justice, authority, and grace. The doctrine of grace-based dominion was, however, condemned as heretical in the Council of Vienne in 1311–1312, and later in the Council of Constance between 1414 and 1418.

Is the intolerance manifested against the people who did not receive some special grace from God through the pope a form of racism? It has been argued that racism is a modern term and was not understood in the same sense in the Middle Ages as it has been in modern times. Even the word ‘race’ has not been considered appropriate for the Middle Ages; instead, the term ‘ethnicity’ has been suggested.¹³ These ideas have recently been refuted by scholarship.

¹³ See e.g., Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1996); John Ganim, “Native Studies: Orientalism and Medieval-

It has been shown that racism is a useful category when it comes to medieval attitudes toward others. The extensive source material of cultural documents between the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, including written material (such as chronicles, legal sources, religious commentaries), sculptures, maps, illustrations, and architectural features, confirm that there has been “racial thinking, racial law, racial formation, racialized behavior and phenomena in medieval Europe before the emergence of a recognizable vocabulary of race.” In addition, “a political hermeneutics of religion enabled the positing of fundamental human differences in biopolitical and culturalist ways to create strategic essentialisms demarcating humankind and populations.”¹⁴

Race has shaped European Western identity (*homo europaeus*).¹⁵ Race and racism have also been used to describe marginalized others, a theme which has become popular in scholarship.¹⁶ Another long-held claim among earlier research has been that racial prejudice against persons of different color should be withdrawn from Rabbinic Judaism. In her chapter, “Black People and Apes: ‘Racism’ in Moses Maimonides,” Marienza Benedetto looks at the subject of a medieval Jewish thinker, Moses Maimonides (1135–1204). In her close reading of sources, she argues that, though it would be difficult to call Maimonides a racist, given the many implications of the term, Maimonides’s works reveal an undeniable hierarchical view of different ethnic groups based on their ethnicity.

Dimitri Obolenskiy’s (1971) widely accepted view of Rus’ as an early state characterized as belonging to a Byzantine Commonwealth has led to the seclusion of Rus’ from what has been defined as European.¹⁷ In addition to this, subjugation by the Mongol Empire has also been argued to exclude Rus’ from the orbit of the history of medieval Europe. Further, with the birth of the Eurasianist

ism,” in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jeremy Cohen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 123–134.

¹⁴ Geraldine Heng, “The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages: Race Studies, Modernity and the Middle Ages,” *Literature Compass* 8:5 (2011): 315–331, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4113.2011.00790.x>; Diane Auslander, “Race and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages,” in *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms, Methods, Trends*, edited by Albrecht Classen, vol. 2. (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 1155–1170.

¹⁵ See Claire Weed, “Ethnic Identification and Stereotypes in Western Europe, circa 1100–1300,” *History Compass* 12 (2014): 586–606.

¹⁶ See e.g., David Kline, *Racism and the Weakness of Christian Identity: Religious Autoimmunity* (Routledge: New York, 2020).

¹⁷ Dimitri Obolenskiy, *Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1453* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971).

intellectual movement in 1917 this seclusion was strengthened even more.¹⁸ This problem has been especially salient regarding medieval Kievan Rus'. Neglecting the religious traditions of Kievan Rus' has, however, led historians to fail to observe the chronicle information in a religious light as a history written by monks. Instead, they tend to become drowned in historical details. In his chapter, "Law without Reason: The Use of Medieval Facts as Justification for Politics in Modern Russia," Jukka Korpela tackles the questions of the legitimation of authority and power in the history of Eastern Christianity by using material from medieval chronicles. Korpela argues that in the Eastern (Russian) interpretation, the truth of power and authority lies in its theological basis, that is, it is more a matter of faith and experience than of rational legitimation. Thus, the Greek *aletheia* is irrelevant in revealing the truth of power. The truth is not analyzed analytically but is created by rhetoric. As Korpela shows, all this is seen in the politics of President Vladimir Putin and his way of reinterpreting history, as well as his justification for the current war in Ukraine.

4 Part II: Toleration

During the first three centuries, Christians themselves were not tolerated, but were instead persecuted in the Roman Empire. However, there are already several intolerant texts towards non-believers, heretics, and schismatics in the New Testament.¹⁹ The true faith came to be a significant way as well as an important weapon to exclude others from the community in early Christianity, as Saint Paul's words to the Galatians (1:9–10) show: "If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God?" Moreover, the doctrine of two kingdoms (earthly and heavenly) and thereafter the strong eschatological dimensions of early Christianity were conducive to sorting the chaff from the grain. Nevertheless, early Christian doctrine also included aspects that speak for "horizontal tolerance," as Rainer Forst has called it. One example is the idea of *mutua tolerantia*, which was based on the bond of love (*caritas*) between the

¹⁸ See e.g., C.A. Raffensperger, *Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus' in the Medieval World, 988–1146* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); I. A. Bessonov, *Russkaya narodnaya es-khatologiya: Istoriya i sovremennost'* (Moscow: Gnozis, 2014).

¹⁹ See e.g., Gal. 1:8 (false prophets are cursed); Titus 3:10 (heretics are condemned in the sharpest terms); 1 Tim. 1:20 (blasphemers are "handed over to Satan.") References from Forst, *Toleration in Conflict*, 41.

faithful within the Christian community, but which could also concern people of different faiths.²⁰

In the chapter “Back to Pre-Constantinian Ethos? Transformation of Christian Identity under the Islamic Rule in Abbasid Times,” Serafim Seppälä explores the changes that took place in Christian identity, and its ethos and ideals under Islamic law. He also deals with the early Christian-Muslim dialogue. Since, according to Seppälä, the concept of identity is a modern notion and thus no word exists for it in Greek, Arabic, or other languages from late antiquity, he understands it “mainly through the *ethical ideals* with the presumption that textual descriptions of idealized forms of perfect behavior to some extent reflect the character of contemporaneous Christian identity and perhaps even more importantly, set lines for its development.” His chapter focuses on texts written by the first patristic author and Orthodox saint, Theodore Abu Qurrah, in the light of two early Athenian apologists, Aristides (writing ca. 125) and Athenagoras (ca. 177). These polemical and apologetic texts expressed intra-Christian perspectives with a fresh redefinition of Christian identity that Seppälä sees as similar to the ethos of the early Church in many ways. The chapter also argues that the return to the status of a population ruled by another enabled and triggered Christians to reactivate the pre-Constantinian approach to Christian life, ethics, and ideals.

During the fourth century, the Christian Church gained official status in the Roman Empire – and as history has shown, soon turned into an institution that persecuted others. Christians held the power of the ‘state’ and used it to impose a uniformity of belief. The law, both in the Eastern and Western portions of the empire, meant that “pertinacious heretics were subject to the punishments of exile, branding, confiscation of goods, or death.”²¹ It is of little worth going through this dark history here, and we will instead only refer to the apologies mentioned earlier in this introductory chapter. Many of the injustices listed in it occurred in the Middle Ages and the early modern age. Even though the medieval Church cannot be called tolerant as a whole, there is evidence of different attitudes toward others that called for mutual toleration and recognition of these others.²² It

²⁰ Forst, *Toleration in Conflict*, 43.

²¹ Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, 3.

²² For the historical and conceptual roots of modern recognition theory, see Saarinen, *Recognition and Religion*; Ritva Palmén and Heikki J. Koskinen, “Mediated Recognition and the Quest for a Common Rational Field of Discussion in Three Early Medieval Dialogues,” *Open Theology* 2:1 (2016): 374–390. For the modern theory of recognition, see Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

should also be remembered that despite defending the ultimate truth of faith in the Church, there were constant debates on doctrinal issues and their interpretation among scholastic theologians, which in itself displays the inherent acceptance of a certain form of diversity. The time of the Crusades aroused discussion both on the intra-faith and interfaith levels in which ideas of toleration and recognition intervened or were rejected.

The key questions in the modern recognition theory mainly pertain to what is called identity politics, namely which lifestyles, identities, and social categories are identified and accepted as minorities, and which are not, and why. Michael Driedger's broad, culturalist understanding of collective identities is less about "what or who groups of people 'really' were, but rather the standards that opinion leaders used to define who they or others were." According to Driedger, "religious identities emerged in a time marked by confessional polemics precisely through the conflicts and demarcations with other groups. In less strained situations, the boundaries could blur more easily."²³

The next chapter, "A Two-Way Process: Encounters between Lutheran Authorities and Anabaptists in Sixteenth-Century Württemberg," written by Päivi Räisänen-Schröder offers an interesting example of the process of shaping otherness and identity. The chapter examines how ideas of religious otherness influenced the practical implementation of the Reformation in the long process of building an early modern Lutheran state church in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Germany. Räisänen-Schröder also shows how these intra-religious controversies provided an increasing number of occasions for drawing boundaries between communities as well as geographical borders. Taking the Duchy of Württemberg as a case study, the author argues that ecclesiastical and worldly magistracies needed religious others to create an official confessional identity, often *ex negativo*. In Württemberg, there was, after the official Reformation (1534), less need for defamatory campaigns against Catholics, Jews, or Muslims, but rather against those evangelical groups who had emerged – like Lutheranism – from the early Reformation movement, but were later marginalized as heretics, radicals, or rebels. These groups, especially Anabaptists, survived mainly in the countryside, challenging the power of both church and state. The chapter outlines how Lutheran ideas of dealing with Protestant heterodoxy were put into practice. The constant indoctrination efforts of both lower magistrates and the laity that followed aimed first to define and identify and

1995); Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. A. Gutmann (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25–73.

²³ Michael Driedger, *Obedient Heretics: Mennonite Identities in Lutheran Hamburg and Altona during the Confessional Age* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 7, 172–173.

then to root out religious otherness that in some respects was not so different from Lutheranism itself.

In his “Introspection and Other Faiths in the Medieval Latin Tradition,” Nicolas Faucher examines whether, according to a number of medieval authors, it is possible to know one’s own beliefs or the belief of others are right or wrong from a moral point of view through a process of introspection, and whether that has an impact on one’s acceptance and toleration of beliefs one deems wrong. He comes to the somewhat counterintuitive conclusion that, according to the authors he studies, there is no univocal link between the possibility to know oneself to be right and to know others to be wrong and the acceptance of others’ beliefs. In particular, he shows that Scotus, who is perhaps the less accepting and tolerant of all the authors studied, and probably one of the least open of the whole Middle Ages, is also the author who spends the most time showing rightful believers can never know themselves to be right. A religion, he hypothesizes, which leaves no room for introspective reassurance may tend to favor a repressive stance: when you cannot rely on yourself to know right from wrong, you can but trust the boundaries set for you by the institution you belong to and attempt to rigidly maintain these boundaries, lest there remains only chaos.

Susan Gottlöber’s chapter, “Thinking the Foundations of Toleration: Nicolas of Cusa on Individuation, Alterity, and Diversity in Human Customs,” analyzes Cusa’s approach to Islam as a test case regarding toleration. In particular, she investigates Cusa’s main positions on Islam and (religious) diversity, including some shifts that occur within his sustained study of the *Qu’ran*. She also studies how he applies the concept of toleration at some key points in two works, in which he engages in an imagined dialogue with Islam. This allows her to identify Cusa’s grounds for accepting, objecting to, and rejecting Islamic doctrines. In her analysis, she uses Rainer Forst’s theory of the three components of toleration (the objection, the acceptance, and the rejection components), but focuses mainly on the third, the rejection component. Her main argument is that while Cusa’s irenic position and his concept of human nature remain constant principles regarding his toleration of Islam throughout his work, Cusa’s application of the concept of *rationalitas* plays a major role in shifting from tolerating to rejecting Islamic doctrines, which are then interpreted as heretical. Even if Gottlöber focuses on the rejection component of Forst’s theory, she also follows what Rainer Forst claims to be the two other components of toleration, namely the objection and the acceptance components. She focuses on the ontological evaluation of individuality and difference in the thought of Nicolas of Cusa in order to investigate its use (or lack thereof) in Cusa’s argument concerning toleration and the plurality of human customs, including religious difference. Gottlöber concludes that Cusa presents an argument for toleration from an inclusivist perspective.

In his chapter, “Dimensions of Toleration in the Political Theory of Johannes Althusius,” Jukka Ruokanen examines German jurist and civil servant Johannes Althusius (1557–1638), who is one of the leading reformist political thinkers in the early modern period. Ruokanen presents an interpretation of Althusius’s political thought that takes its religious features seriously, but relocates them in their proper place in the structure of the social and political life of the time. As a result, space is cleared for the secular, or rather civil, aspect of social and political life within the overall religious setting of Althusius’s theory. As a consequence, for Althusius, toleration is not so much religious as civil in character. This conclusion is supported by the fact that, while belonging to the true religion is necessary in order to receive an ecclesiastical office, it is not a definite criterion for obtaining citizenship or a civil office.

However, it must be emphasized that since, for Althusius, political associations aim toward the wellbeing of the soul, i.e., salvation, as well as the wellbeing of the body, he has a limited view of religious toleration. In principle he urges toleration towards such Christian beliefs as do not deviate from true Calvinist religion in the core foundations of faith. This toleration or non-toleration is that of the ruler towards his people. Interestingly, the right to resist a tyrannical ruler could also be seen as a dimension of toleration. According to Althusius, people are required to endure a certain degree of tyrannical behavior from their legitimate ruler. Thus, in the fundamentally covenantal relationship between the ruler and the people (and God), both parties are expected to tolerate some undesirable behavior by the other party, i.e., some transgressions of their mutual contract (and divine law). These dimensions of toleration are not, however, symmetrical. The ruler is required to tolerate deviation only in regard to religious beliefs, whereas people are required to tolerate a broader spectrum of offenses by their ruler.

Considering medieval Iberia as a multi-confessional space, historiographical texts written within the peninsula often had to portray different religious communities, practices, and beliefs. They did so either by describing their own observations, by incorporating other coeval testimonies into their narratives, or, especially from the thirteenth century onwards, by translating Arabic written chronicles into Latin and vernacular languages. Likewise, they were confronted with the problem of how to make the religious particularities of Islamic and Jewish communities understandable to their mostly Christian audiences. In her chapter, “How to Translate Religious Concepts? Answers from Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Medieval Iberian Historians,” Maria Joana Gomes looks at several examples extracted from a set of chronicles written in medieval Iberia in order to try to unveil and analyze the rhetorical, stylistic, and discursive means by which medieval historians rendered religious differences understand-

able. The chronicles that she explores are the *Historia Arabum*, written by Rodrigo de Rada, Archbishop of Toledo around 1240; the *Estoria de España* of Alfonso the Wise, written between 1274 and 1281; and the *Cronicle of Mouro Rasis*, a translation of a ninth-century Arabic chronicle into Galician Portuguese. She shows that the translation techniques and vocabulary used in the corpus that she comments on display both a desire to help the reader acknowledge and understand part of an unfamiliar reality and a will to represent Muslims as religious opponents.

5 Part III: Altruism

The wellbeing of oneself and others is an integral part of humanity. Thus, the relation between one's own good and the common good has been one of the core questions of ethical and political theory from ancient times until today.²⁴ The Golden Rule that obliges us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves was commonly discussed among Christian theologians in the Middle Ages and early modern times. The Rule is also widely accepted in some form or other in all religious traditions.²⁵ In medieval discussions, the Golden Rule is understood as being one mode of charity. The Rule was not understood as a one-way relationship with the goal of sacrificing oneself for another, but as a mutual relation between loving oneself and loving others. It was not, however, a matter of egoism or altruism, but a matter of combining selfish charity with reciprocity.

Modern research has shown that altruism as a universal phenomenon exists in all societies studied so far. It has also been noted that the number of different forms of altruism varies significantly between and within societies, and presumably over different times and eras. The concept itself is manifold, including emotions such as empathy, sympathy, or compassion.²⁶ According to Russell Hardin,

²⁴ See e.g., Arthur S. McGrade, Matthew S. Kempshall, and John Kilcullen, eds., *The Common Good in Late Medieval Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²⁵ Marcus G. Singer, "Golden Rule," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 3, ed. Donald M. Borchert (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1972), 365–367. Historically the Golden Rule has played an important role on the basis of law and society, especially in Protestant countries. See Carter Lindberg, *Beyond Charity: Reformation Initiatives for the Poor* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993).

²⁶ See e.g., Frans B. M. de Waal, "Putting the Altruism Back into Altruism: The Evolution of Empathy," *Annual Review of Psychology* 59 (2008): 279–300, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17550343/>; Robert Wuthanow, *Acts of Compassion: Caring for Others and Helping Ourselves* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

altruism weakens with increasing group size because people show themselves to be more responsible when it comes to those closer to themselves (i.e., family members, relatives, friends, neighbors) than to those living in the same country or continent. This same feature is also reflected in the willingness to help, with one's nearest ones coming first.²⁷ Similarly, Frans de Waal argues that altruism is limited by what can be afforded. The sphere of morality is extended further only when the survival (i.e., basic needs) of the innermost sphere has been secured. Thus, the more prosperous a society, the wider the circle/sphere of solidarity is.²⁸

Interestingly, these modern notions are also suitable for describing the behavior of medieval and early modern people. However, the relation between egoism and altruism was different in the medieval period compared with early modern times. In medieval thought, in general, there was no pure egoism or altruism in the sense in which we speak about them today. It could be argued, however, that the notion of *ordo caritatis*, the order of love, contained both forms, the pursuit of one's own good as well as the pursuit of the common good. The order of charity also included an obligation to help oneself first, then one's nearest, and only then those further away. Thus, the principle of *ordo caritatis* raises problems, especially in matters concerning poor relief. In the chapter "From Charity to Rights: Theological and Legal Perspectives on Poor Relief in the Middle Ages," Virpi Mäkinen deals with the changes needed in poor relief. Since in medieval society helping the poor was mainly based on people's benevolence, attention was specifically paid to the helper, not to the poor. Among Christian duties was an obligation to help the poor, and on the side of the poor, the picture was a passive one. Poor people were receivers; poverty was seen as a compulsion dictated by circumstances such as orphanhood, illness, disability, or unemployment, and attempts to eradicate the causes of poverty were few. Institutional and secularized poor relief was born in the early modern age. As Mäkinen shows, the late medieval discussion on the rights of the individual also had a significant effect on the view of the care of the poorest: the debate shifted the focus from the helper to the poor, and their right to receive aid and survive. Such rights also extended to foreign people, even non-believers. The poor laws, which have certain common political, social, as well as religious ideas and doctrines in their background, offer illuminating examples of identity making and inclusive and/or exclusive strategies related to them.

²⁷ Russell Hardin, "Altruism and Mutual Advantage," *Social Service Review* 67:3 (1993): 358–373.

²⁸ de Waal, "Putting the Altruism Back into Altruism," 279–300.

Medieval ethics is usually individualistic in approach. This is clearly due to the religious focus on the interior dimension of morality provided by theology, leading to the prominent role played by the concepts of intentionality, personal responsibility, and imputability. Aquinas, as a prominent example, has a particularistic account of morality, since for him what is to be done from a moral standpoint is the result of the particular and individual, free, and autonomous judgment of practical reason in a concrete situation. This perspective, also evident in Aquinas's concept of freedom of conscience, does not, however, prevent his ethics from being based on universal moral principles and on a common *ethos*. Aquinas is, of course, aware of the social dimension of ethics, e.g., in his idea of a *bonum commune*, in his conception of human beings as *animal sociale*, or in his reflections on 'altruism' – in short, all notions that concern others and their rights and needs. This raises interesting questions, for example about the constitutive role of intersubjectivity in ethics. In what contexts does Aquinas encounter others in his ethics and to what degree are these considerations essential for understanding ourselves? More particularly, what role does otherness play in such ethical considerations and reasoning?

Isabelle Mandrella examines these questions in her chapter "Encountering Others in Medieval Ethics: The Case of Thomas Aquinas." She argues that Aquinas's ethics has a communal and social dimension, since he develops the idea of a *bonum commune* and the notion of the human being as an *animal sociale*. For Aquinas, to be human and moral requires consideration of others. The core of ethical behavior is the moral responsibility of an individual human agent: principles concerning others like "nobody is to be harmed" or the Golden Rule are valuable because of their rationality. For Aquinas, rationality and the respect due to other human beings are so closely connected that it is evident that consideration for others must be included. As Mandrella states, "This means that the human being, as a naturally social being, is always oriented to others, but can never be replaced by any other person."

Emanuele Lacca's chapter "Justice, Dignity, and the Care of Others: Pedro de Ledesma, True Interpreter of Thomas Aquinas," shows how legal and distributive justice (linked together with commutative justice) were attributed to moral action. This opens the way to ideas of dignity and taking care of others. The analysis is based on the Spanish Dominican Pedro de Ledesma's (1544–1616) moral work *Suma Moral* (1598) in which philosophy, theology, jurisprudence, and their traditions meet to explain how human beings, through a knowledge of good and evil, can act correctly in the world and thus foster their earthly fulfillment and that of their fellow men. According to Lacca, Ledesma's innovation lies in his ability to create a text that is truly applicable in society by reusing the Aristotelian tradition, especially Aquinas's interpretation of it. The multiple cases of con-

science become an integral part of his interpretation in the recognition of its complexity and non-absoluteness. Ledesma is thus representative of those who in his time were prepared to provide a definitive elaboration of the concept of dignity at the crossroads of justice and care for others.

Social emotions play a significant role in attitudes towards others and ways of treating them. They are related to the thoughts, feelings, or actions of other people but they also have a self-reflexive nature. Despite the fact that social emotions denote how we understand ourselves and estimate our own value, they also show signs of altruism and determine where we feel safe and whom we trust. In her chapter “Hope as a Social Emotion in Late Medieval Philosophical Theology,” Ritva Palmén addresses the emotion of hope (*spes*) in the teaching of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century scholastic theologians Radulphus Ardens (d. ca. 1200), John of La Rochelle (1200–1245), Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), and Giles of Rome (1243–1316). This chapter shows that these theologians deemed hope a deeply social emotion relative to one’s social group. Encompassing both emotional and intellectual elements, hope is also a complex attitude toward future desired things and events. The chapter offers new unexplored perspectives on how medieval authors explained the relation between individuals and their communities as well as their relation to themselves and their place in society. The analysis of emotions reveals the role of the community in our psychological formation and the ways in which we depend on or trust others.

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Part I: **Evil**

Reima Välimäki

Chapter 1

The Worst of All Heresies: Polemical Responses to Waldensianism ca. 1200 – 1400

Introduction

The enemy closest to you is the most dangerous one. Such an enemy requires considerable effort in making the distinction between right and wrong – between heresy and orthodoxy.¹ Such was the case with the Waldensians, whose beginnings were situated in twelfth-century reform ideals: the will to follow Christ and the Apostles, live in poverty, and preach the word of the Gospel. The group, founded by Valdes of Lyon in the 1170s, initially gained the support of the local archbishop and even the pope for its humble, penitential life. However, the members' will to preach clashed with the hierarchical structure of the high medieval Church. Preaching was reserved to learned members of the clergy and religious orders – and not even to all of them: only those authorised by the pope or bishops were allowed to preach. Valdes's group was expelled from Lyon, and, in the decree *Ad Abolendam* promulgated at the Council of Lyon in 1184, the 'Humiliati' – or 'the Poor of Lyon' – were anathematised. The reason was not a doctrinal difference, but the group's presumption to preach without authority.²

In the following centuries, however, the Waldensians became doctrinally heretical in the eyes of the medieval Church. This was due to a mutually enforcing process in which a dissident group became increasingly radical and hostile towards its persecutors and the Church itself continued to define the boundaries of its doctrine, such as purgatory, in part to distinguish itself from these very dis-

1 Ian Christopher Levy, *Holy Scripture and the Quest for Authority at the End of the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 177; Jonathan Z. Smith, "Differential Equations: On Constructing the Other," in *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion*, ed. Jonathan Z. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 230–250.

2 On the early history of the Waldensians, see Michel Rubellin, "Au temps où Valdés n'était pas hérétique: Hypothèses sur le rôle de Valdés à Lyon (1170–1183)," in *Inventer l'hérésie? Discours polémiques et pouvoirs avant l'Inquisition*, ed. Monique Zerner (Nice: Centre d'études médiévales, 1998), 193–218; Euan Cameron, *Waldenses: Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 11–22.

sidents.³ The best documentation of late medieval Waldensian beliefs and practices comes from the inquisitorial and polemical sources of late fourteenth-century German-speaking Europe. Waldensians denied, among other things, the validity of sacraments ministered by sinful priests, doubted the ability of the Virgin and the saints to interfere in the affairs of the living, did not believe in purgatory, deemed indulgences and masses for the dead invalid, and confessed their sins to their own lay confessors, known as the Brethren. They considered many material aspects important to the Catholic lived religion⁴ – such as blessed water, images, church buildings, graveyards, and priestly vestments – superfluous.⁵ That all such features were touchstones of orthodoxy is at least as telling about late medieval Catholicism as it is about the Waldensians. By the fourteenth century, the Catholic lived religion had become more elaborate, and the Church demanded more of the laity than it had in previous centuries. Consequently, more things had become heretical. Inquisitors demanded the accused elaborate their stance not only towards the Eucharist or Trinity, but towards processions, sacramentals, and clerical vestments. In the words of Euan Cameron: “It was the scope of popular Catholicism that had increased, not the depth of Waldensian hostility to it.”⁶ Yet, it would be wrong to reduce Waldensianism to a mere negative mirror

3 Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 169.

4 The concept of ‘lived religion’ has established itself in the study of premodern religion. It emphasises religion as a part of everyday life and its practices, questioning the dichotomy between elite and popular religion while nevertheless perceiving religion as something intentional, purposeful, and structural. See Sari Katajalla-Peltomaa and Raisa Maria Toivo, “Introduction to Medieval and Early Modern Experiences of Gender and Faith,” in *Lived Religion and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Sari Katajalla-Peltomaa and Raisa Maria Toivo (Abingdon, Oxford, and New York: Routledge, 2021), 2–3.

5 Dietrich Kurze, “Zur Ketzergeschichte der Mark Brandenburg und Pommerns vornehmlich im 14. Jahrhundert: Luziferianer, Putzkeller und Waldenser,” *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands* 16/17 (1968): 77–81; Cameron, *Waldenses*, 125–139; Peter Segl, “Die Waldenser in Österreich um 1400: Lehren, Organisationsform, Verbreitung und Bekämpfung,” in *Friedrich Reiser und die “waldensisch-hussitische Internationale” im 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. Albert de Lange and Kathrin Utz Tremp (Heidelberg, Ubstadt-Weiher, and Basel: Verlag Regionalkultur, 2006), 163–175; Georg Modestin, *Ketzer in der Stadt: Der Prozess gegen die Strassburger Waldenser von 1400*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Studien und Texte 41 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2007), 124–147; see also Marina Benedetti and Euan Cameron, eds., *A Companion to the Waldenses in the Middle Ages*, Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition 103 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022); on the material cult and Waldensians, see Reima Välimäki, “More Powerful than Mere Matter? Forbidden but Practiced Material Religion among the Late Medieval German Waldensians,” in *Tangible Religion: Materiality of Domestic Cult Practices from Antiquity to Early Modern Era*, ed. Ria Berg et al., Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae 49 (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2021), 239–253.

6 Cameron, *Waldenses*, 134.

of contemporary Catholicism. The late medieval Waldensians had a sense of identity and history, a conviction that they alone had preserved the apostolic tradition amidst the Roman Church's corruption by wealth and power since the days of Emperor Constantine and Pope Sylvester.⁷

Despite their anticlericalism and critique of what they regarded as later inventions, the Waldensians held the basic Catholic worldview, accepting its main articles of faith and sacraments. It was precisely for this reason they were so dangerous. A Dominican inquisitor writing in the Austrian diocese of Passau in the 1260s, commonly known as the Anonymous of Passau,⁸ described in an often-quoted passage that the 'Leoniste' – that is, the Waldensians – were the most dangerous heretics, because, among other things, they had a great outward appearance of piety (*species pietatis*): "In front of the people they live justly, and they well believe all about God and in all the articles that are included in the Creed – they blaspheme only the Roman Church and clergy, which is easy to believe for many laypeople." In the same passage, the Anonymous continued that they can be recognised from their words and actions: their manners are modest and composed, they avoid using prestigious clothing, they do not trade because they avoid lying, fraud, and oath-taking, and, instead, they live out of their own hands' work. They do not multiply riches but are content with what is necessary. They are chaste and moderate in food and drink. In their speech, they are likewise modest and precise, avoiding idle talk and lies.⁹ In other words, the Waldensians would be perfect Christians were it not all just a front to hide their perverse heresy.

With the apparent similarities between the two, the boundary between Catholicism and Waldensianism was built and reinforced by several centuries of polemical refutations of Waldensian errors. This Catholic polemical response is the topic of this chapter. I concentrate not on specific doctrinal debates but on polemical strategies that were intended to undermine the very credibility

7 Peter Biller, "Goodbye to Waldensianism?," *Past and Present* 192:1 (2006): 3–33, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtl004>.

8 Alexander Patschovsky, *Der Passauer Anonymus: ein Sammelwerk über Ketzer, Juden, Antichrist aus der Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica Schriften 22 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1968).

9 Alexander Patschovsky and Kurt-Victor Selge, eds., "Auszüge aus dem Sammelwerk des Passauer Anonymus (um 1260)," in *Quellen zur Geschichte der Waldenser* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1973), 73–74: "Hec Leonistarum magnat habens speciem pietatis – eo quod coram hominibus iuste vivant et bene omnia de deo credant et omnes articulo, qui in symbolo continentur – solummodo Romanam ecclesiam blasphemant et clerum, cui multitudo laicorum facilis est ad credendum." Translations from Latin by the author unless otherwise indicated.

and authority of the Waldensians to voice theological arguments in the first place. I start from early polemics written around 1200 and end with the texts written in the 1390s, when the persecution of German Waldensians inspired the last significant medieval anti-Waldensian treatises (after which, focus was on the Hussites). A short book chapter cannot pretend to be an exhaustive treatment of such a topic, but I have aimed for an illustrative selection of examples.

I have chosen the typology proposed by Herbert Grundmann in his classic essay *Der Typus des Ketzers in mittelalterlicher Anschauung* (1927)¹⁰ to guide the reading of sources. For historians of heresy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Grundmann is the giant on whose shoulders we stand to see further. Although they have been much commented and built upon, his ideas remain original and topical. Moreover, very recently, his essays on heresy, inquisition, and literacy were published in an English translation for the first time.¹¹

For Grundmann, the two essential building blocks of the profile (*typus*) of the heretic in the medieval worldview were *superbia* (pride) and *species pietatis* (the outward appearance of piety). The latter we already encountered in the description by the Anonymous of Passau. I have classified many often-repeated polemical statements about Waldensians according to this profile:

Superbia:

Waldensians preach and minister sacraments without being appointed.

Waldensians teach despite being unlearned and illiterate.

Waldensians allow women to teach.

Species pietatis:

Waldensians feign piety to appear holy and hide heresy.

True nature of heresy is demonical.

In the medieval understanding, *superbia* was particularly the root of vices – the evil separating men from God and the Church – and, therefore, an archetypical feature of a heresiarch. Early on, Grundmann pointed out the prominent use of *superbia* in the polemical treatment of Waldensians, considering it striking how similar lifestyles and inner motivations became opposites in descriptions of the

10 Herbert Grundmann, “Der Typus des Ketzers in mittelalterlicher Anschauung,” in *Kultur- und Universalgeschichte: Walter Goetz zu seinem 60. Geburtstage* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1927), 91–107; more easily available reprint in Herbert Grundmann, “Der Typus des Ketzers in Mittelalterlicher Anschauung,” in *Ausgewählte Aufsätze* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1976), 313–327; the references in this article are to the recent English translation, Herbert Grundmann, “The Profile (Typus) of the Heretic in Medieval Perception,” in *Herbert Grundmann (1902–1970): Essays on Heresy, Inquisition, and Literacy*, ed. Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane (York: York Medieval Press, 2019), 16–29.

11 See the previous footnote.

Franciscans and Waldensians, “representing the most extreme *humilitas* (humility) on the one hand and the most extreme *superbia* on the other.”¹² In the following, I revisit Grundmann’s typology and expand his analysis to demonstrate how successive generations of polemicists used this profile of a heretic to deal with the dangerous similarity of Waldensian and Catholic teachings to reaffirm the dividing line between heresy and orthodoxy. A secondary goal of this chapter is to demonstrate the ongoing validity of Grundmann’s methodological essays and encourage new generations of scholars to take up and read his works.

1 *Superbia*: Pride and Vainglory

One of the arguments against the Waldensians repeated over the centuries was that, out of pride, the group presumed clerical authority without being ordained and sent. Alain of Lille wrote the first full-scale, medieval, anti-heretical polemic, *De fide catholica contra haereticos*, in 1199–1202.¹³ One of the four books is dedicated to Waldensians, whose representatives – perhaps even Valdes himself – Alain had met in the Third Lateran Council. From the very beginning, Alain’s goal was to undermine the legitimacy of Valdes’s lifestyle and mission:

They are called Waldensians, from their heresiarch, who was called Waldus. He invented a new sect, led by his spirit, not sent by God. Namely that he presumed to preach without a prelate’s authority, without divine inspiration, without knowledge and without learning. He is a philosopher without sense (*ratione*), a prophet without vision, an apostle without mission, a teacher without instruction, whose disciples – or rather mousetraps (*muscipuli*) – seduce simple people in different parts of the world: they turn them away from the truth, not convert them to it.¹⁴

Alain of Lille, a contemporary of Valdes, directed his attack against Valdes’s person, who had presumed to invent a new sect. Alain offered few particulars about Valdes’s conversion, focusing on two aspects of *superbia*. First, Valdes assumed

¹² Grundmann, “The Profile (Typus) of the Heretic,” 20.

¹³ L. J. Sackville, *Heresy and Heretics in the Thirteenth Century: The Textual Representations* (York: York Medieval Press, 2011), 13.

¹⁴ Alain of Lille, “De fide catholica contra haereticos,” in *Patrologia Latina* 210, 377C–377D: “Hi Waldenses dicuntur, a suo haeresiarcha, qui vocabatur Waldus, qui suo spiritu ductus, non a Deo missus, novam sectam invenit, scilicet ut sine praelati auctoritate, sine divina inspiratione, sine scientia, sine litteratura praedicare praesumeret. Sine ratione philosophus, sine visione propheta, sine missione apostolus, sine instructore didascalus, cuius discipuli, imo, muscipuli, per diversas mundi partes, simplices seducunt, a vero avertunt, non ad verum convertunt.”

the role of a prophet and apostle without legitimate authority. Second, he ventured to teach the Scriptures despite being uneducated and, thus, without learning or a sense of argumentation.

Some 40 years later, around 1240 in Lombardy, the Dominican Moneta of Cremona, a Catholic polemicist very well versed in dissident teachings, wrote his massive treatise against Cathars and Waldensians. While certainly writing from the Church's perspective with a basis in an earlier and contemporary polemical tradition, Moneta nevertheless wrote in a time when the descriptions of these two 'sects' were not solid but still emerging. His description of the origins of the Waldensians was probably based on sources from within the movement itself.¹⁵ Like Alain, Moneta knew Waldensians were a new group founded by 'Valdesius' in Lyon some 80 years before – a remarkably accurate dating by medieval standards, missing Valdes's conversion and preaching in Lyon by only a decade.¹⁶ Moneta also presented a Waldensian legitimation of Valdes's disobedience to the prelates of the Church: the Roman Church had fallen into corruption when Pope Sylvester I accepted temporal power with the Donation of Constantine. In their modern days, the Waldensians, of which Valdes was the first, had restored the Church.¹⁷ Moneta, a subtle rather than demonising polemicist, then wove together two central aspects of the heresy *topos*: pride and ignorance. He recounted:

And they want this through this [passage] in Matthew 17:11, where it says that "Elias indeed shall come, and restore all things," by which they understand Valdesius, and they say that the Church which had faltered in Sylvester is restored by him. To them it is to be said that in them this word of David in Psalm 118:85 is implemented: "The wicked have told me fables," these who wish to be doctors of law not understanding neither what they talk about, nor through which they assert it.¹⁸

15 L. J. Sackville, "The Textbook Heretic: Moneta of Cremona's Cathars," in *Cathars in Question*, ed. Antonio Sennis (York: York Medieval Press, 2016), 219–221, 228; Peter Biller, "Moneta's Confutation of Heresies and the Valdenses," in *Identità valdesi tra passato e presente*, ed. Susanna Peyronel Rambaldi, *Bollettino della società di studi valdesi* 219 (2016): 27–42.

16 Moneta (Cremonensis), *Monetae Adversus Catharos et Valdenses: Libri quinque*, ed. Tommaso A. Ricchini (Rome: Ex Typographia Palladis, excudebant Nicolaus, et Marcus Palarini, 1743), 402.

17 Moneta (Cremonensis), 412.

18 Moneta (Cremonensis), 412. "Idem etiam habere volunt per illud Matth. 17:11. ubi dicitur 'Elias quidem venturus est, et restituet omnia'; per quem intelligunt Valdesium, et ab ipso dicunt restitutam Ecclesiam, quae defecerat in Silvestro. Quibus dicendum est, quod impletum est in eis illud David verbum Psalm. 118:85: 'Narraverunt mihi iniqui fabulationes,' isti qui volunt esse legis Doctores non intelligentes, nec quae loquuntur, nec de quibus affirmant." Quotes from the Bible translated according to Douay-Rheims Bible.

Whether interpreting Valdes as Elias was originally a Waldensian statement or Moneta's polemical exaggeration, the conclusion of this passage was clear to a medieval reader: ignorant heretics bypassed the words of the Gospel affirming John the Baptist as the promised Elias, and, in their vainglory, elevated their own founder to the role reserved for the precursor of Christ.

Another Dominican, Stephen of Bourbon, wrote a popular *exempla* collection, *Tractatus de diversis materiis predicabilibus*, in Lyon in the 1250s. In it, he included an important description of the origins of the Waldensians based on local eye-witness accounts he had heard decades earlier.¹⁹ Stephen retained the memory of the rich man Valdes as the founder of the movement, and, like Moneta, he explained Valdes's actions as vainglory born out of ignorance and obstinacy.²⁰ Regarding Valdes's clash with the archbishop of Lyon, Stephen asserted:

Now, when they had spread error and scandal everywhere as a result of their rashness and ignorance, they were summoned before the archbishop of Lyons, whose name was John, and were forbidden by him to concern themselves with expounding Scriptures or with preaching. They, in turn, fell back on the reply made by the apostles. Their leader, assuming the role of Peter, replied with his words to their chief priests: "We ought to obey God, rather than men" – the God who had commanded the apostles to "Preach the gospel to every creature." He asserted this as though the Lord had said to them what He said to the apostles.²¹

Stephen continued that even the Apostles did not preach before the Holy Spirit gave them power, understanding, and the gift of tongues; meanwhile, the simple layman presumed to take up this endeavour. Stephen, apparently well aware that Valdes and his early followers were orthodox save their disobedience against the Church's authority, focused his attack on the unthinkable arrogance of the idea that someone could assume the apostolic mission and legitimate their obstinacy with the steadfastness of St Peter.

¹⁹ Peter Biller, "Medieval Waldensians' Construction of the Past," in *The Waldenses, 1170–1530: Between a Religious Order and a Church*, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 197; Pekka Tolonen, "Medieval Memories of the Origins of the Waldensian Movement," in *History and Religion: Narrating a Religious Past*, ed. Bernd-Christian Otto, Susanne Rau, and Jörg Rüpke (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 175.

²⁰ Grundmann, "The Profile (Typus) of the Heretic in Medieval Perception," 19.

²¹ English translation according to Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans, eds., *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 210; Latin text in Étienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues tirés du Recueil inédit d'Étienne de Bourbon dominicain du XIII^e siècle publiés pour la Société de l'histoire de France*, ed. A. Lecoy de La Marche (Paris: Librairie Renouard; Henri Loones, 1877), 292.

The claim refuted by Moneta – that Valdes had restored the early Church that had fallen in error – probably originates from the Waldensians themselves. The assertion appears in the writings of a remarkably learned early Waldensian – later a Catholic convert – Durand of Huesca. In his anti-Cathar treatise *Liber antiheresis*, Durand justified the Waldensian mission by stating that, after the clergy had fallen into vice, Christ once again chose simple men to fight errors and heresy in the way he had chosen unlearned fishermen in the beginning of his own ministry.²² Durand made a forceful and learned argument for Waldensians but did not claim any direct descendancy from the early Church. This idea seeped into the story in the generations following Durand of Huesca, Moneta of Cremona, and Stephen of Bourbon, when the details of the Waldensians' origin were lost to both the Waldensians themselves and the majority of Catholic polemicists and inquisitors. According to the late medieval Waldensian historiography, a small group of true Christians had actually split from the Church when Pope Sylvester I accepted the Donation of Constantine. Valdes simply assumed the leadership of this true Church, which had lived clandestinely for centuries; ergo, he was not a founder of a new movement.²³ Catholic polemicists responded to the claim. The Anonymous of Passau wrote that this ancient origin was one of the reasons why the Waldensians were so dangerous: "They say that [their sect] has endured since the time of Sylvester. Others say that since the time of the Apostles."²⁴ Consequently, this heightened the importance of proving the Waldensian Brethren were not on a mission authorised by the Church or divine truth.

At the end of the fourteenth century, a man unusually well informed of Waldensian beliefs, practices, and their own texts, attacked the group both as an inquisitor and as a polemicist. In 1395, Celestine provincial Petrus Zwicker wrote his treatise *Cum dormirent homines*, which became one of the most popular anti-heretical polemics of the Middle Ages.²⁵ Familiar with Waldensian history,

22 Durandus von Osca, *Die ersten Waldenser II: Der Liber antiheresis des Durandus von Osca*, ed. Kurt-Victor Selge (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967), 8; Tolonen, "Medieval Memories," 180.

23 Biller, "Medieval Waldensians' Construction of the Past," 201–206; Tolonen, "Medieval Memories," 179–181.

24 Patschovsky and Selge, "Auszüge aus dem Sammelwerk des Passauer Anonymus (um 1260)," 73: "Dicunt enim, quod duraverit a tempore Silvestri; alii dicunt, quod a tempore apostolorum."

25 The fundamental work on Zwicker's treatise is Peter Biller, "The Anti-Waldensian *Treatise Cum dormirent homines* of 1395 and Its Author," in *The Waldenses, 1170–1530: Between a Religious Order and a Church*, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 237–269; for an updated view on the work, especially its manuscript tradition, see Reima Välimäki, *Heresy in Late Medieval Germany: The Inquisitor Petrus Zwicker and the Waldensians* (York: York

Zwicker was very confident in dismissing all claims of their divine mission and origins in the times of the early Church.²⁶ Although the details he gave regarding Valdes's name, city, and time of conversion were somewhat incorrect, he quite accurately narrated Valdes and his group's path to heresy: from a conversion experience to an imitation of apostolic life, the will to preach, and its prohibition as well as excommunication when disobeying this prohibition.²⁷ Zwicker also provided a perfect example of how, in the eyes of a medieval clergyman, heresy was born out of vainglory, obstinacy, hatred of the clergy, and a combination of old and new errors:

And because they resisted stubbornly, they were condemned by the Church. And because they did not presume to preach openly, they nevertheless preached secretly. From there they started to destroy, condemn and reject everything, in their hatred of priests and the true priesthood, with the sole exception of sacraments, taking from ancient errors of old heretics and from new and ruinous articles added on top [of the old].²⁸

Waldensianism was thus reduced to the pride, malice, and insubordination of one modern man. If there was anything ancient in it, it came from old heresies – not an apostolic way of living.

Closely related to *superbia* were accusations of ignorance and illiteracy. Herbert Grundmann's monumental influence in medieval studies is also felt in these concepts. His classic essay traces the development of the opposites *litteratus* and *illitteratus* from antiquity to the late Middle Ages. In high medieval Europe, *illitteratus* referred to a person not trained in Latin and grammar and thus excluded from clerical education.²⁹ This is the frame through which we must understand

Medieval Press, 2019), 64–103, 262–289; on Zwicker's argumentation, recently Adam Poznański, "Means of Persuasion in Medieval Anti-Heretical Texts: The Case of Petrus Zwicker's *Cum dormirent homines*," in *Inquisition and Knowledge, 1200–1700*, ed. Peter Biller and L. J. Sackville (York: York Medieval Press, 2022), 178–194.

26 Välimäki, *Heresy in Late Medieval Germany*, 250.

27 Petrus Zwicker, "[Pseudo]-Petri de Pilichdorf contra Haeresin Waldensium Tractatus [Cum dormirent homines]," in *Lucae Tvdensis episcopi, Scriptores aliquot svccedanei contra sectam waldensium*, ed. Jacob Gretser, Maxima Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum, et Antiquorum Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum 25, ed. M. de La Bigne (Lyon: Anissonios, 1677), 278B–F.

28 Zwicker, *Cum dormirent homines*, 278E: "Et ipsi resistentes contumaciter ab Ecclesia condemnati sunt. Et quia iam in palam praedicare non praesumebant, occulte saltem praedicabant. Vnde in odium Clericorum et veri Sacerdotij ex antiquis erroribus veteranorum haereticorum, et superadditis nouis et damnosis articulis, inceperunt, solis exceptis Sacramentis, omnia destruere et condemnare, et reprobare."

29 Herbert Grundmann, "*Litteratus – Illitteratus*. Der Wandel einer Bildungsnorm vom Altertum zum Mittelalter," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 40 (1958): 1–65. Translated in Grundmann, *Essays on Heresy, Inquisition, and Literacy*, 56–125.

references to unlearned and illiterate heretics.³⁰ A lack of education in theology and canon law was related to *superbia* in a circular way. First, ignorance caused the heretic to misinterpret the Bible and then teach others. Second, interpreting the Bible was *superbia* precisely because the heretic was not formally educated.

Ignorance, illiteracy, and a lack of education were attributes associated with the Waldensians from the very beginning. We may again take Alain of Lille as an example:

How do the illiterate preach, who do not know the Scriptures? Is not their preaching more for the ruin of many than their resurrection? Also, how have those learned the letters, who have not studied? We see that those who are holier than them, those who have knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, like many Cistercians, do not preach, because evidently, they are not sent. If it is dangerous to preach for the wise and the holy, it is most dangerous for the unlearned who do not know what to preach, to whom to preach, how to preach, when to preach, and where to preach.³¹

Like preaching without a superior's permission, preaching without learning relates back to the sin of pride: unlearned heretics presume to take up a task that much wiser men shun.

A special form of such a presumption was that Waldensians permitted women to teach. There is a grain of truth in the repeated Catholic accusation of preaching Waldensian women. At least in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there were female Waldensians who were religious authorities and teachers.³² In polemics, this turned out to be another proof of the Waldensians' heresy: had not Paul the Apostle himself told women to keep silent?³³ The treatise *De inquisitione hereticorum*, written in the second half of the thirteenth century, is a good

30 Peter Biller, "The Topos and Reality of the Heretic as *Illiteratus*," in *The Waldenses, 1170–1530: Between a Religious Order and a Church*, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 169–190.

31 Alain of Lille, *De fide catholica*, 379C–D: "Quomodo etiam praedicabunt illitterati qui Scripturas non intelligunt? Nonne eorum praedicatio potius est in ruinam multorum quam resurrectionem? Item, quomodo litteras noverunt, qui non didicerunt? Videmus etiam sanctiores iis non praedicare, qui intellectum sacrae Scripturae habent, ut multos Cistercienses, quia nimirum missi non sunt. Si sapientibus et sanctis periculosum est praedicare, periculosissimum est idiotis, qui nesciunt quod praedicandum, quibus praedicandum, quomodo praedicandum, quando praedicandum, ubi praedicandum."

32 On Waldensian women, see esp. Jörg Feuchter, "Waldenserinnen im Mittelalter," in *Fragmenta Melanchthoniana 1. Zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Günter Frank and Sebastian Lalla (Heidelberg, Ubstadt-Weiher, and Basel: Regionalkultur Verlag, 2003), 47–68; Marina Benedetti, *Donne valdesi nel Medioevo* (Torino: Claudiana, 2007).

33 Alain of Lille, *De fide catholica*, 380A.

example of attacking the female ministry: “Not only men but also women teach among them, because women have greater access to [other] women to corrupt them, so that through them also their men would be subverted, just like through Eve the serpent allured Adam.”³⁴

In the polemics, heretics were habitually referred to as seducers of innocents, and this image is particularly powerful with the gendered allusion to Eve, as in the excerpt above. Over a century later, the inquisitor Zwicker ridiculed the Waldensian Brethren, stating they did not introduce anyone to their sect “but while you hide in a corner or travel through the world, old crones and little women are you ministers, and so they have accustomed to pour into others the venom they have drank from you.” These *vetule et muliercule* were also the ones leading ‘new little sheep’ to the heresiarch.³⁵

2 *Species Pietatis*: The Outward Appearance of Piety

The second core accusation in anti-Waldensian polemics was the group’s hypocrisy and outward appearance of piety. Grundmann noted that, if anti-heretical polemicists had only exaggerated the worst aspects of heresy, they would have failed in their mission: “One had to recognise the heretics’ pious appearance as zealous for the faith and pleasing to God, and then emphasise rather than obscure these traits – for therein lay the danger.”³⁶ The inquisitors and preachers fighting heresy faced the fact that ascetic, poor Waldensian Brethren genuinely appeared holier to laypeople than their local priests (who were often disinterested in pastoral care) – and especially their haughty bishops and abbots. The Brethren’s holy reputation is well-attested in late medieval German inquisitions.³⁷ Even some inquisitorial sources describe the Waldensian Brethren in ways that make the reader doubt their heresy. There is an intriguing, short description of the Waldensian Brethren entitled *De vita et conversacione*, which was most likely constructed after several German Brethren converted to Cathol-

34 Wilhelm Preger, ed., “Der Tractat des David von Augsburg über die Waldesier,” *Abhandlungen der historischen Classe der königlich bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 14 (1879): 209: “Non autem solum viri sed et femine apud eos docent, quia feminis magis patet accessus ad feminas pervertendas, ut per illas eciam viros subvertant, sicut per Evam serpens illexit Adam.”

35 Zwicker, *Cum dormirent homines*, 280D.

36 Grundmann, “The Profile (Typus) of the Heretic,” 24.

37 Cameron, *Waldenses*, 129.

icism in 1391, and it is their information from which this description of the ordination and lifestyle of the Brethren stems. Most versions of the text have additions and omissions that frame their piety as heretical *species pietatis*: the Brethren fast and wear humble clothing in order to appear holy in front of their followers.³⁸ However, a recently discovered version of the texts in a Weimar manuscript is so devoid of polemics that, at some point, a later reader of the manuscript felt it necessary to correct the phrase ‘the articles of faith’ to ‘the errors of this heresy,’ a wonderful demonstration of the fragility of the dividing line between holy men and heresiarchs.³⁹

Therefore, in most texts, it was necessary to reframe the Waldensians’ pious life as a façade behind which lay the true diabolical nature of heresy. This view was almost poetically expressed by Petrus Zwicker: “The heresiarchs of the sect of Waldensian heretics lethally infect the greatest multitude of Christ’s believers with their perverse doctrine, the death-bringing poison of errors under the sweetness of pretended sanctity.”⁴⁰ According to polemicists, this hypocrisy and pretended sanctity were features not only of the heresiarchs, but of their followers as well. The Anonymous of Passau lamented how heretics falsely (*ficte*) confess their sins, take communion, and hear sermons.⁴¹ Passages such as this reflect the social reality of late medieval Waldensians. They lived amongst their Catholic neighbours; so, at least minimum participation in Catholic services was necessary to avoid accusations of heresy, with many Waldensian followers seeming to have been quite creative in combining Catholic and Waldensian practices in their lived religion.⁴²

The Waldensian’s meetings – where the Brethren preached, heard confessions, and gave penance to their followers – were, by necessity, secret, taking place in private homes often under the cover of night. Some inquisitors knew quite well that these meetings were no more scandalous than laymen preaching

38 E. Werner, “Nachrichten über spätmittelalterliche Ketzer aus tschechoslowakischen Archiven und Bibliotheken,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig. Gesellschafts- und sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* 12:1 (1963): 265.

39 Reima Välimäki, “The Portrayal of the Waldensian Brethren in the *De vita et conversacione* (c. 1391–1393),” in *Inquisition and Knowledge, 1200–1700*, ed. Peter Biller and L. J. Sackville (York: York Medieval Press, 2022), 157–177. The Weimar manuscript’s text is edited in the article’s appendix.

40 Zwicker, *Cum dormirent homines*, 278A: “Haeresiarchae sectae Waldensium haeticorum plurimam Christi fidelium multitudinem suis peruersis doctrinis, sub quibusdam simulatae sanctitatis dulcedinibus errorum veneno mortifero lethaliter infecerunt.”

41 Patschovsky and Selge, “Auszüge aus dem Sammelwerk des Passauer Anonymus (um 1260),” 74.

42 Kurze, “Zur Ketzergeschichte,” 84–86; Cameron, *Waldenses*, 134–137.

and hearing confessions; however, this, in their eyes, was scandalous enough. Petrus Zwicker dedicated several chapters of his treatise to refute the Waldensian ministry, with the core of his argumentation being that true Christian faith must be public and manifest – not private and secret.⁴³ Another sharp-sighted inquisitor, Bernard Gui, likewise noted that the reason for gathering at night was quite simply for the sake of secrecy and security.⁴⁴ Not all clergymen were as sober in their judgement. As Grundmann noted, “judges of heresy and moralists of the worst sort, however, easily stoked ordinary people’s horror of night-time underground gatherings of men and women into incredible fantasies.”⁴⁵ This fantasy was ‘Luciferan’ heresy, a belief in a diabolical sect that worshipped Satan or demons in night-time orgies that included incest and child-murder. Grundmann had seen the connection between this ‘Heretical Sabbath’ and the early modern Witches’ Sabbath,⁴⁶ and scholars following him have convincingly deconstructed the sect of Luciferans as a clerical fantasy and imagined heresy – often precisely against Waldensians.⁴⁷ Such fantasies were driven by the conviction that, if the heretics resemble good Christians in every way, there must be a hideous secret under this sheep’s clothing.

3 Conclusion: Framing the Worst of Heresies

A review of two centuries of anti-Waldensian polemics reveals conflicting goals and discourses. The goal of an anti-heretical polemics was to both convince its readers of the dangers of the heresy as well as provide counterarguments against them. In the case of the Waldensians, these goals were often at odds. Many po-

⁴³ Zwicker, *Cum dormirent homines*, 279F–281A.

⁴⁴ Bernard Gui, *Practica inquisitionis heretice pravitatis*, ed. Célestin Douais (Paris: Picard, 1886), 250.

⁴⁵ Grundmann, “The Profile (Typus) of the Heretic,” 25.

⁴⁶ Grundmann, “The Profile (Typus) of the Heretic,” 27–28.

⁴⁷ See esp. Alexander Patschovsky, “Waldenserverfolgung in Schweidnitz 1315,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 36 (1980): 137–176; Alexander Patschovsky, “Der Ketzler als Teufelsdiener,” in *Papsttum, Kirche und Recht im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Horst Fuhrmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Hubert Mordek (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991), 317–334; Peter Biller, “Bernard Gui, Sex and Luciferanism,” in *Praedicatores, Inquisitores I. The Dominicans and the Medieval Inquisition. Acts of the 1st International Seminar on the Dominicans and the Inquisition, 23–25 February 2002*, ed. A. Bernal Palacios (Rome: Institutum Historicum Fratrum Praedicatorum Romae, 2004), 455–470; Kathrin Utz Tremp, *Von der Häresie zur Hexerei: “Wirkliche” und imaginäre Sekten im Spätmittelalter*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica Schriften 59 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2008), 275–353.

lemical authors – from the contemporaries of Valdes to late medieval inquisitors – were relatively well informed of the history of Valdes’s conversion and early ministry. Recounting this history was in itself an argument against the Waldensians: it proved they were a novel sect. Yet, the early history of the Waldensians also revealed that, originally, there was nothing heretical in their doctrine. Another contradiction was present in descriptions of the Waldensian lifestyle: they were humble, pious, and churchgoing – and, therefore, dangerous and difficult to detect. To deal with these contradictions, the polemicists applied the sin of *superbia* and the closely related *species pietatis*. Pride and obstinacy led Valdes and early Waldensians to illicit ministry, the unavoidable conclusion of which was heresy and error. Therefore, the group’s humble customs and piety were nothing more than a façade hiding its true inner corruption.

One likewise reaches the conclusion that, although polemical treatises made good use of the literary stereotype of the heretic, at least some authors possessed a nuanced understanding of the religious other they encountered. When reading the Anonymous of Passau or Petrus Zwicker, one gets the impression that, at some level, these authors acknowledged that the heretics they encountered were humbler and more virtuous than their fellow churchmen. In the polemics, however, the distinction between heresy and orthodoxy is absolute. The aim of writing anti-heretical polemics was thus to guard and enforce the boundary between *civitas dei* and *civitas diaboli* – not only in the minds of readers, but in the mind of the author as well.

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Michael W. Dunne

Chapter 2

Richard FitzRalph on the Religious Other: Avignonian Intersections between Christians, Muslims, and Tatars

Introduction

Richard FitzRalph (Fyrauf, Filius Radulfi, Hibernicus, Armachanus) was born at Dundalk in the north-east of Ireland around 1299 to an Anglo-Norman family. He went to Oxford (presumably aged 15) and graduated with a doctorate in theology in 1331.¹ He became Chancellor of the University of Oxford in 1332, before embarking on a successful career both in England and in Ireland. He made no fewer than four visits to the papal court at Avignon, first as Dean of Lichfield and then as Archbishop of Armagh (Dominus Armachanus). On his first visit to Avignon, only five years after concluding his lectures on the *Sentences*, FitzRalph was consulted as one of the eighteen leading theologians of Europe by Pope Benedict XII (1334–1342), to correct the views of Pope John XXII (1316–1334), on the beatific vision. He is perhaps best remembered for his opposition to the mendicant orders on the question of what constitutes evangelical poverty. While pursuing his case against the Franciscans he died at Avignon of the plague in 1360.

His surviving works include over ninety sermons (mostly unedited), a commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, writings on the poverty question, and a *Summa de quaestionibus Armenorum* (*the Summa of Armenian Questions*) relating among other things to the unification of the Armenian and Latin Churches.

Here I want to trace his views, scattered throughout numerous works, on his attitudes towards the religious other, namely, Eastern Christians (the Armenian and Greek Churches), Muslims, and the Tatars. As a representative figure of an acknowledged expert at the papal court and someone who seemed to have the knack of finding himself at the centre of what was happening, his views are il-

¹ The standard reference work for FitzRalph's life and thought remains Katherine Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate: Richard FitzRalph in Oxford, Avignon and Armagh* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

luminating regarding some generally accepted notions and also anticipating some shifts in Christian self-understanding regarding Scripture and the importance of grace.

1 Conflict – Ireland

One of the most enduring of FitzRalph's ideas, certainly not unique to him, but becoming particularly potent in the expression which he gave to it was the notion of grace-based dominion. In the hands of John Wyclif (1328–1384) and Jan Hus (1373–1415) it became a revolutionary idea in terms of the othering of the religious other and then in the suggested dispossession of unbelievers in the so-called New World. The original dispossession which perhaps helped to focus his attention on the problem occurred in the Ireland of FitzRalph's day and in particular in his own diocese of Armagh. Of course, the local application of the idea was to something which was generally elaborated by many European thinkers before him.

In a late sermon entitled *Erumpe et clama que non parturis*² given in the parish church of his hometown Dundalk on Sunday, 3 April 1356, FitzRalph subjects the people to a very academic speech. He speaks about the practical modes of repentance: prayer, almsgiving, and fasting. He then shifts focus to a theme which had become characteristic of his approach to questions of social justice, namely grace-based dominion.

FitzRalph states³ that in the congregation are those who have sinned through following 'Marcher Law' and the customs of their forefathers.⁴ If they do not repent, they are guilty of invincible ignorance and are on the way to perdition: for *sequens legem marchie siue diaboli*, they commit stealing, murder, fornication, and robbery. They cannot pretend that they do not know the commandments nor justify why they hesitate to confess their sins to their bishop (going instead to the friars for lighter penances). Nor can they justify their actions by stating that in the marches there is a state of war because the decision that there is a

² Richard FitzRalph, *Erumpe et clama que non parturis*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 144, ff. 73r–75r.

³ FitzRalph, *Erumpe et clama que non parturis*, f. 74v.

⁴ Marcher Law was a kind of frontier law operating along a constantly fluctuating border between one nation and the other, composed of elements drawn from both Irish and English law and based on local customs and agreements. The problem was lack of accountability to the king since people did largely what they wanted and local rulers ruled as they saw fit. FitzRalph saw it as a ready excuse for every injustice.

state of war depends upon the king. FitzRalph concludes with a condemnation of those who take the law into their own hands and out of a supposed zeal for justice kill others whereas what really motivates them is hate, rancour, or a hidden greed to take the property of the other. They are acting wickedly and must leave the law to those who are appointed to enforce the law.

This echoes the content of a sermon given in the Carmelite Church in Drogheda seven years earlier on 25 March 1349, where he referred to the constant war between the English and the Irish.⁵ Both sides, he stated, were convinced that it was correct to kill their enemies and to steal their property without any justification through self-defence. These people, he stated, are in a state of mortal sin and cannot make satisfaction until they return what they have stolen. They can fast, give alms, and pray earnestly but they remain in a state of sin until they restore what they have unjustly appropriated. Just dominion⁶ cannot be obtained through committing sin but only when based upon grace. One may occupy the lands of others and take their goods even in accordance with the law of the land, but this is against the law of God and the law of conscience. Those in a state of sin cannot enjoy just dominion.

With the publication of his dialogue, the *De pauperie Salvatoris* of 1356, FitzRalph made known to a wider audience his teaching on just dominion based on grace. This work was to have far-reaching consequences in the later writings of John Wycliff and later by the fifteenth century by Jan Hus (1369–1415), and by Lutherans. Both Wyclif and Hus took FitzRalph's idea to mean that rights, and hence the authority of secular rulers, were dependent on God's grace. Thus, if a ruler was a heretic or a sinner his laws could not be binding in conscience – only a righteous ruler could be a just legislator. An unrighteous ruler could be deposed; and such 'unrighteous' included unbelievers.

By the sixteenth century, the idea that grace might entitle one to rule over those who were not in a state of grace began to be used to justify the occupation of the territories of the New World and the deposition of native rulers. This arose from the pressing issue in contemporary politics, namely the legitimisation of the conquest of the New World. With regard to the latter, Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546) argued against FitzRalph that non-Europeans have rights and pro-

⁵ See Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate*, 284–287.

⁶ I use 'just dominion' here in the sense of the *terminus technicus* used by FitzRalph. Dominion means lordship in general but it was a complicated concept since it was also used when referring to ownership or reign and was used in different contexts: biblical, legal, theological, etc. Part of its propensity to give rise to polemics can be traced to its, on the one hand, being widely used but yet, on the other hand, being poorly defined as a term and so remaining rather ambiguous in the various debates which employed it.

tections under the *ius gentium* and are subject to no other positive law than their own. It was Vitoria's observations on the implications of this and his questioning of the legitimacy of the Spanish invasion of America which led to his maintaining, following Thomas Aquinas (1224–1274), that there are principles of natural justice, which are applicable to all human beings.⁷

2 Diversity of Religious Belief: Sermon for the Feast of St Katherine, Avignon, 1338

In a sermon preached in the Franciscan Church at Avignon while he was Dean of Lichfield, FitzRalph addresses the question of the diversity of religious beliefs.⁸ This content of much of this sermon, dealing as it does with unbelievers, may have been occasioned by the fact that a number of the Franciscans present would make up part of the papal embassy to Beijing which departed in the following month. The details of the voyage to the east and back via India and Sri Lanka will be documented by one of its members, John of Florence OFM.⁹

In the course of the sermon, FitzRalph reveals how much effort he has made to contact people who have been to the East and has tried to ascertain as much as he can from these “trustworthy people.” It presents him with a dilemma, however, because, as these reports make clear, the situation is not free from a certain ambiguity because the faith of the other challenges the security of my own belief, particularly when he hears that instead of unbelievers being converted to Christianity, Christians have converted to Islam:

Our Lord in Luke 8:13 where in his exposition of the seed that fell on the rock he says: “These are they who, when they hear, receive the word,” that is, of faith, “with joy; and these have no roots; for they believe and in a time of temptation and fall away.” Whence trustworthy people report that they saw some Christians who by the Saracens were turned away from the law and faith of Christ.¹⁰

⁷ See Michael Dunne, “Richard FitzRalph of Dundalk (c. 1300–1360) and the New World,” *Archivum Hibernicum* 58 (2004): 243–258.

⁸ The text is to be found in Siegfried Wenzel, *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer: Selected Sermons in Translation* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 196–219; see also, Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate*, 161–162.

⁹ Wenzel, *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer*, 202.

¹⁰ Wenzel, *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer*, 212.

FitzRalph's reply is that these people did not have a tenacious will. However, he does have to acknowledge that it seems, at least on the surface of things, that the faith of the unbelievers is as strong, if not stronger than many Christians:

Behold, people from any group of unbelievers, who we think lack charity altogether, are ready to suffer not only pains but also death in defense of their religion. This you can see every day in the Jews. Moreover, trustworthy people report that among the Tatars worshippers of certain idols cut their members with extremely sharp knives and throw them in the face of their idol, and at last they pierce themselves with a knife. Reporters say they have seen that themselves.¹¹

However, the mutual othering becomes clear when FitzRalph acknowledges that believers of different faiths all think that their own is the correct one:

But you say: Why should a Saracen or Tatar believe me more than I him? For he will commend his religion and its author as much as I commend mine. If in this case he will not believe me or receive my faith, why is he who does not accept my religion going to be damned, rather than I who do not wish to receive his?¹²

The solution is found in the truth of Christian faith, the other, not me, "will be damned because he does not have the ground for salvation, namely faith and baptism."¹³ I will not be damned for not believing him, but he will be damned for not believing me. This might seem unjust:

But you say: This damnation seems to be unjust, namely, that God condemns a person who did not do what he could not do. For if an unbeliever does not believe the articles of the Christian faith because he cannot believe them against his judgement, as we have assumed, his condemnation seems to be unjust. For Augustine says, in his book *On Free Will*, that no one commits a sin in what he cannot avoid. Therefore, he who remains an unbeliever because he cannot believe commits no sin.¹⁴

FitzRalph's answer is, I suppose, as merciful as a fourteenth-century theologian can be:

I answer: He does not commit a sin properly speaking, that is, which deserves bodily punishment. But if he follows his natural reason in all things, he will only be punished as an

11 Wenzel, *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer*, 212.

12 Wenzel, *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer*, 204.

13 Wenzel, *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer*, 204.

14 Wenzel, *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer*, 204.

infant who dies without baptism is punished, that is, with the pain of damnation, which is but the lack of divine vision or of true beatitude.¹⁵

3 Scripture in the Autobiographical Prayer

At the end of the printed text of the *Summa de quaestionibus Armenorum* is FitzRalph's "Autobiographical Prayer," which is one of the more personal documents we have from him.¹⁶ It details a time of troubles, pursued and escaping to safety from the king's officers who had a writ for his arrest. This may date to the time when King Edward III (1327–1377), who supported the mendicants, wished to block FitzRalph's attempt to bring his case to the papal court and so can be dated to around 1357. FitzRalph's "rejection" of Scholasticism,¹⁷ inspired as it was by the scientific methodology of Aristotle, and his acceptance of the more immediate truth of Scripture has profound implications for his approach to otherness in the *Summa*, as we shall see below.

FitzRalph's "Autobiographical Prayer" was written in conscious imitation of Augustine's *Confessions*. (FitzRalph, of course, was not the first Irish bishop to write about his life in the form of a *confessio*, that honour goes to Saint Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland from the fifth century.) Having undergone a religious conversion like Augustine, FitzRalph's own desire for conversion is expressed in the same literary model and language of the emotions.

It is interesting that John Foxe (1516/17–1587), the English historian and martyrologist, described this text as a 'confession':

All this with much more, he himself expresseth in a certain prayer or confession made to Christ Jesus our Lord, in which he describeth almost the whole history of hys own life.

15 Wenzel, *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer*, 204.

16 *Summa de quaestionibus Armenorum*, ed. Johannis Sudoris (Paris, 1512), ff. 160v–161r.

17 But see, William O. Duba, "Conversion, Vision and Faith in the Life and Works of Richard FitzRalph," in *Richard FitzRalph: His Life, Times and Thought*, ed. Michael W. Dunne and Simon Nolan O. Carm (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), 103–127; 107: "Therefore, if FitzRalph meant to reject scholasticism, his rejection did not extend either to an abandonment of all scholastic structures, or to abandoning scholastic ideas and innovations in favour of purely biblical ones. Nor did he cease using Aristotelian ideas and debating with scholastic authors. Indeed, his most popular work, the *Summa de questionibus Armenorum*, is also at heart a fundamentally scholastic exercise, even if it ends with the very autobiographical prayer that describes his conversion."

Which prayer I have to show in an old written hand and hereafter (Christ willing) intend as tyme serveth to publish the same.¹⁸

In the prayer FitzRalph writes:

Nor were You, the Solid Truth, absent from me in those six years [while he was at Avignon 1337–1343], but, in Your Holy Scriptures you shone upon me as in a certain radiant mirror; whereas in my former years, in the trifles of the philosophers, you had been hidden from me as in a certain dark cloud. For previously, I used to think that through the teachings of Aristotle and certain argumentations that were profound only to men profound in vanity, – I used to think that I had penetrated to the depths of Your Truth, with the citizens of Your Heaven; until You, the Solid Truth, shone upon me in Your Scriptures, scattering the cloud of my error, and showing me how I was croaking in the marshes with the toads and frogs. For until I had You the Truth to lead me, I had heard, but did not understand, the tumult of the philosophers chattering against You, the pertinacious Jews, the Proud Greeks, the carnal Saracens, and the unlettered Armenians ... At last, O Solid Truth, You so shone upon me from above, that I burned to seize and hold You, the Truth, Jesus promised to us in the Law and the Prophets. And when in the turmoil of lawsuits a certain spell of serenity had smiled upon me, I sought You in Your sacred Scriptures, intimately and importunately, not only by reading, but also with prayer, until You came to meet me joyously in Your ways.¹⁹

In his *De Causa Dei*, Thomas Bradwardine (ca. 1300 – 1349), who lived a very varied and full life as a cleric, scholastic theologian, mathematician, and finally, Archbishop of Canterbury, also presents an account of personal conversion which like FitzRalph's is clearly modelled in style and content upon Augustine in the *Confessions*.²⁰ In this FitzRalph also anticipates the *Turnerlebnis* of Luther,²¹ which the latter expressly connects with *Confessions* VIII. The conversion has come about through the light of Scripture which has led him away from academic croaking in the swamp of Aristotelianism but 'others' who are identified here are the Jews, the Greeks, the Saracens, and the Armenians – all of which will be confronted in detail in his great *Summa de quaestionibus Armenorum* where the place of Scripture will always be to the fore.

¹⁸ John Foxe, *Book of Martyrs* (1576), V, K. Edward 3, "The Story of Armachanus. Contention about Friars privileges," 393.

¹⁹ Quoted in W. A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: University Church, 1955), 132–133.

²⁰ Thomas Bradwardine, *De causa dei*, ed. H. Seville (London, 1618), I, 35.

²¹ The so-called 'tower-experience,' i.e., the moment in 1519 when Luther is said to have understood the foundation of grace-based faith.

4 The *Summa de quaestionibus Armenorum*

The *Summa de quaestionibus Armenorum*, is a dialogue in nineteen books and had a wide manuscript circulation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and was also printed in 1511.²² As Katherine Walsh points out, the manuscript circulation was closely connected with humanist circles linked with the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1445) and the revival of negotiations for the reunion of Eastern and Western Churches.²³ There has yet to be an extensive study of FitzRalph's *Summa*, possibly because the poor quality of the only printed edition has put most scholars off the sometimes impenetrable text.²⁴ The text can be divided as follows:

Books I–X deal with Armenian doctrines;

XI–XIV consider errors more generally attributable to the Eastern Churches including the Greeks;

XV–XVII consider problems under discussion in the Western Universities: grace, free will and predestination;

XVIII–XIX deal with the Jews and Muslims.

Books I–XIV were written ca. 1349–1351 and were clearly the fruit of discussions which he had during his second visit to Avignon (1337–1344) with most of the protagonists being at Avignon after 1240. His interlocutors are the Armenian Prelates Nerses Balientz and John Kernatzi, Barlaam the Calabrian, and a convert Jewish Scholar. Books XV–XVII return to more scholastic discussions and probably date to the years when FitzRalph returned to Lichfield (1344–1347) and when he was working and preaching in the Oxford area and probably renewed contacts with the university. FitzRalph was back in Avignon from 1349 to 1351 and by 1350 had moved on to devote his energies to the more polemical *De pau-*

²² To date there is no overall study of the *Summa* other than that found in Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate*, 129–181; but see also Duba, “Conversion, Vision and Faith,” 121–126, on Book XIV and the denial of the Greeks and some Armenians of the Beatific Vision. On the influence of Barlaam the Calabrian as a source for FitzRalph's understanding of Greek theology, see Christopher Schabel, “Richard FitzRalph on the Filioque before and after His Conversations with Barlaam the Calabrian,” in *Richard FitzRalph: His Life, Times and Thought*, ed. Michael W. Dunne and Simon Nolan O. Carm (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), 129–155; 138–153 which deals especially with Book VI.

²³ See Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate*, 130–131; Schabel, “Richard FitzRalph on the Filioque,” 153, note 86.

²⁴ *Summa de quaestionibus Armenorum*, ed. Johannis Sudoris (Paris, 1511). When necessary, I have checked the printed text with MS Vat. lat. 1033.

perie Salvatoris, so the likely dating for the final Books XVIII–XIX is the years 1348–1349.

The *Summa* is dedicated to two Armenian prelates with whom FitzRalph had discussed the topics contained in the book: Nerses Balientz, who under Dominican influence had formed a ‘Latinising’ wing in the Armenian Church, the *Fratres Unitores* and who was one of the principal architects of a list of 117 errors of the Armenian Church compiled under Pope Benedict XII in 1341.²⁵ The furious reaction of the Armenian Church at what they regarded as a malicious misrepresentation of their beliefs and practices was presented to Pope Clement VI (1342–1352) around 1345 and led to a more conciliatory approach by the papal curia. The other dedicatee was John Kernatzi who was an orthodox monk who met with and came under the influence of Dominican ‘missionaries’ in the East.²⁶ The attempt by the *Fratres Unitores* to impose the Latin Rite on the Armenian Church led to their persecution throughout the East and from the Crimea up to Poland. FitzRalph’s knowledge of the detail of the disputed points between the Latin and Armenians churches could be an indication that he was one of a panel of ‘experts’ called upon to examine their ‘errors.’ It has to be said that FitzRalph does not call them errors but ‘questions.’ He introduced his remarks by stating that certain heresies had arisen in Armenia owing to an absence of a sound knowledge of Scripture and that it was this that had led some Armenians to send representatives to Avignon to seek guidance from Sacred Scripture from Latin theologians.

FitzRalph’s work was more systematic the list of 117 errors and emphasised more what was in common, was fairer to the positions of the Armenians and the Greeks, and emphasised the unique position of the Catholic faith against Muslims and Jews. FitzRalph strove to present a reasonable discussion of the main points of disagreement and his approach was that of a theologian who wished to prove the truth of the Catholic faith from Scripture. It is with regard to the latter that FitzRalph opens out the discussions in the *Summa*. The topics dealt with are as follows:

Books I–X Armenian doctrines: the two natures of Christ, the Armenian rejection of the Council of Chalcedon which they confused with Nestorianism or rejection of the hypostatic

²⁵ On Nerses life and activity as known between 1338 and 1353, see Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate*, 137–142. See also, Irene Bueno, “Avignon, the Armenians, and the Primacy of the Pope,” *Archae Verbi* 12 (2015): 108–129.

²⁶ On John of Kerna’s activity from 1328 to his death in 1348, see Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate*, 143.

union, and in their insistence on the single nature of Christ they had been tainted with the Monophysite heresy; total immersion, etc.

Books XI–XIV consider errors more generally attributable to the Eastern Churches including the Greeks: purgatory, the beatific vision “visio nuda et clara divine essencie” as enjoyed by the souls of the blessed immediately after death; the Armenian doctrine that there is no punishment of the impious after death until the Final Judgement.

Barlaam of Calabria (Bernardo Massari, ca. 1290–1348)²⁷ was his guide to his knowledge of Greek doctrine regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit and the Greek doctrine of Purgatory. Barlaam’s conviction that Aristotelian methods of proof could be applied to theological problems was attacked by Gregory Palamas (ca. 1296–1359), the chief exponent of Byzantine mystical theology and monastic spirituality. Barlaam regarded the *filioque* and the use of unleavened bread as the two main problems to be discussed rather than the primacy of the pope and this at a time when the Byzantine Emperor Andronikos III (1328–1341) had sent Barlaam to the West to plead for help against the Turks. After the death of Andronikos Barlaam will leave for the West where he was employed as a teacher of Greek at Avignon and where among his students was Petrarch, with whom he read Plato. Eventually he will be disowned by the Greeks, and he will accept a Greek-rite bishopric from Pope Clement VI in 1342.²⁸

In the end, FitzRalph’s attitude towards the Armenians and the Greeks is that whoever does not obey the pope will be damned and that conformity in everything, rites, orders, and *studia* is required. His taunts to the effect that the Latins have now exceeded the Greeks in the wisdom the latter once had no doubt had a not so reconciling influence at the Council of Florence.²⁹

FitzRalph’s knowledge of Judaism apart from the obvious source of the Old Testament depended on a convert Jewish scholar who helped him to understand Messianic texts from the Old Testament such as the Book of Deuteronomy 32:39 and involved him in the study of an ancient copy of the Pentateuch held at the

²⁷ Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate*, 156–158; Schabel, “Richard FitzRalph on the *Filioque*,” 139.

²⁸ Schabel, “Richard FitzRalph on the *Filioque*,” 153.

²⁹ See, *Summa de quaestionibus Armenorum*, VII, 26 (Paris, f. 52rb): “Quod autem in praesenti hunc articulum [the *filioque*] Graeci se negare praetendunt aut est pertinacia excaecantis aut fictio oris contra mentis iudicium et gloriam sapientiae quam supra Latinos habebant antiquitus, quam amittere videantur et hactenus amisisse.” Quoted by Schabel, “Richard FitzRalph on the *Filioque*,” 154: “That at this time the Greeks pretend to deny this article [of faith] is either the obstinacy of someone who shuts his eyes or an invention of the mouth against the judgment of the mind and contrary to the glory of the [superior] wisdom that they used to have over the Latins in ancient times, which they seem to be losing and to have lost up to now.”

Dominican Convent of Bologna.³⁰ This is an aspect of the *Summa* which sheds light on the early study of the textual history of the Bible by Western scholars and deserves further investigation.

As we have seen above in his Sermon for the Feast of St. Katherine, FitzRalph's presence at the papal court in Avignon brought home the realisation that the larger part of the world was not inhabited by Christians and that the pagan peoples were in the majority. In Book XVIII of the *Summa* FitzRalph, like Aquinas before him, is well aware of the practical problems of dealing with peoples who do not accept the authority of Scripture. In a long objection, his interlocutor Iohannes argued about the weakness of using scriptural arguments from the New Testament against the Jews, or from either the Old or New Testaments against the Tartars, Saracens, or other infidel peoples, whereupon FitzRalph set out to prove the intrinsic superiority of the Christian message.

More than half of Book XVIII is devoted to an elaborate comparison of Muslim teaching as revealed in the Koran and that of Christ as revealed in the Gospels. The single source of FitzRalph's knowledge of Islam was the translation and paraphrase of the Koran made by Robert of Ketton (fl. 1141–1157) at the behest of Peter the Venerable.³¹ FitzRalph studied this text minutely and like many others he set out to 'prove' that the Koran guaranteed the authenticity of the Bible. In many respects his work is quite unoriginal except that he seems to have taken the scriptural defence against Islam further than other medieval authors. He seemed to have no personal contacts with Muslims and had no way of checking up on his sources and so repeated some bizarre notions which the Muslims were alleged to have of Christ. In some cases, the passages quoted from the Koran had been so distorted in translation that they seemed almost like pure invention.³² His treatment lacks the range and depth of someone such as Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464), a German theologian who had to work with the same texts and translations but who considered a broader range of authorities as well.³³

30 See Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate*, 158–159.

31 See Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate*, 168.

32 See *Summa de quaestionibus Armenorum*, XVIII, 13 (Chapter 12 in the Paris edition where chapters 1–2 were run together).

33 As Walsh points out (*A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate*, 169–170), FitzRalph may have used a manuscript now at Merton College (Ms H. 3. 13), or one closely related to it, which contains Robert of Ketton's translation but the *Chronica mendosa et ridiculosa Saracenorum* as well as Herman of Carinthia's *Doctrina Mahumet*. As Walsh comments, the text of the translation of the Koran is incomplete in this manuscript, breaking off at Azoara LXXVII and none of FitzRalph's references refer to the later sections of the Koran.

In Book XVIII, c. 13 of the *Summa*, FitzRalph refers to Azoara XIII (Sura 5, 110):

When Allah saith, O Jesus son of Mary, remember My favour unto thee and unto thy mother; how I strengthened thee with the holy Spirit so that thou spakest unto mankind in the cradle as in maturity; and how I taught thee the Scripture and Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and how thou didst shape of clay as it were the likeness of a bird by My permission and didst blow upon it, and it was a bird, by My permission; and thou didst heal him that was born blind and the leper by My permission; and how I restrained the Children of Israel from harming thee when thou camest unto them with clear proofs; and of them who disbelieved exclaimed, This is naught else than mere magic.³⁴

He does not quote the rest of the text: “And when Allah saith, O Jesus son of Mary! Didst thou say unto Mankind: Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah? He saith: be glorified! It was not mine to utter that to which I had no right.”³⁵ FitzRalph, however, draws the implication nonetheless, that this would mean that the Gospel is false as Christians understand it. And yet it is accepted that Christ carried out miracles and thereby confirms the sanctity of both the Old and New Testaments.³⁶

FitzRalph continues in a similar mode until the end of Book XVIII, c. 21 where the authority of “our law” is confirmed by miracles and, in c. 22: “Habet igitur lex nostra firmamentum proprium quod illa non habet.” The arguments adduced are at best sketchy, at worst completely circular and really are not prepared to concede anything to Islam.

34 *The Glorious Qu’ran*, transl. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall (Istanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 2006, 4th ed.). The version which FitzRalph quotes (Azoara XIII.3) is as follows: “Deus Iesum Mariae filium affatus, cui tribuit animam mundam atque benedictam, qua iuvenes et infantulos affatus est, et formis uolatilium luteis a se factis insufflans uolatum praebuit. Caecum natum, atque leprosum curauit: Mortuos resuscitauit: quem item librum, et sapientiam, nec non Euangelium et testamentum docuit, inquit: Te sic ad filios Israël cum uirtutibus meo uelle ueniente, eorum increduli magum esse perhibent. Tu uero de bonis tibi matricque tuae diuinitus datis, mihi gratias redde.” *Alcoran*, Azoara XIII, trans. Robert of Ketton, Bibliander edition 1550, 44: “Bibliander, 1550,” Qur’ān 12–21. Translations of the Qur’ān in Europe, 12th–21st centuries. [online]. Consulted at <https://quran12-21.org/en/editions/bibliander/alcoran/s5-2>.

35 *The Glorious Qu’ran*, 127. *Alcoran*, Azoara XIII, Bibliander edition 1550, 44: “Ipsi iterum Deo dicenti: O Iesu Mariae fili, tu persuades hominibus, ut Dei loco te matremque tuam duos deos habeant, et uenerentur? respondit Iesus, Nolit Deus, ut ego quid praeter uerum dicam.”

36 *Summa de quaestionibus Armenorum*, XVIII, 13: “Vbi dicit Deum docuisse falsum est christianum Euangelium. Vnde in hoc auctoritatem diuinam utrumque habere docuit. Et preter hoc ex quo affirmat Christum accepisse a Deo animam mundam et benedictam et maxima et plurima fecisse miracula, affirmare conuincitur tam legem quam tradidit quam legem quam etiam approbavit scilicet legem antiquam sanctas esse.”

5 Conclusion

FitzRalph made it clear at the beginning of the *Summa* that the arguments against the errors he was combatting would be derived almost exclusively from Scripture, owing to the lack of agreement between the two parties concerning the authority of the Roman See and of the accepted Latin theologians.³⁷ Rather curiously, FitzRalph also stated that he wished only to abide by the literal meaning of Scripture by which he meant that it was sufficient to know the mind of the author.³⁸ This ‘common sense’ approach might be problematic but it also ran the danger of ignoring some of the more subtle difficulties of interpretation. As Walsh points out, this was a characteristic of the later FitzRalph who tended to make quick decisions in rather complex matters which inevitably led to confrontation and controversy.³⁹ FitzRalph’s deep knowledge of Scripture unfortunately means that many chapters of the *Summa* are just strings of quotations linked together with little attempt at exegesis. He was not quite a proponent of *sola scriptura* but his almost total neglect of arguments from the early Christian tradition which both the Greeks and Armenians would have recognised is curious. When dealing with the Jews and Muslims in Books XVIII to XIX he did make use of arguments from reason and natural history, but the arguments are mainly circular, proving the authority of the Old Testament from the witness of the New, and vice versa.⁴⁰

This being the case, from the point of view of Scripture the other remains other for FitzRalph, despite a certain openness on his part towards understanding the position of the religious other. However, whatever toleration he may have when Dean of Lichfield for the unavoidable ignorance of the other, for the mature Armachanus the logic of the truth of Revelation meant that in the final analysis, salvation is for the baptised.

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³⁷ See *Summa de quaestionibus Armenorum*, I, 1 and again at XVIII, c. 10; Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate*, 170–171.

³⁸ Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate*, 170–171.

³⁹ Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate*, 171.

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Marienza Benedetto

Chapter 3

Black People and Apes: ‘Racism’ in Moses Maimonides

Introduction

It was September 2020 when former French President Nicolas Sarkozy was invited to the TMC Quotidien programme to present his latest work, *Le temps des tempêtes*. He had no idea that the presentation would be remembered, not so much for the book in question, but rather for a strange, and not even immediate, association of ideas between monkeys and blacks in Agatha Christie’s novel *Dix petits nègres*: no longer having the right to pronounce the word ‘monkey,’ without someone feeling insulted, had led to the absurd decision, according to Sarkozy, to replace the original ‘nègres’ with the less susceptible ‘soldats’ in the French version of Christie’s novel. Questioning political correctness was to cost Sarkozy the serious accusation of racism.¹

A similar episode had already occurred a few years earlier, in 2018. It was exacerbated, however, by the fact that the chief rabbi of the Sephardic Jews of Israel, Rav Yitzhak Yosef, had become the subject of a veritable media storm for having compared black people to monkeys in one of his weekly sermons. The rabbi’s entourage promptly intervened in his defence, appealing to an unspecified passage in the Talmud, in which the basis of such an unfortunate comparison is said to have been laid.²

There is nothing new in such an abstruse search for legitimacy in equating black people to monkeys, if one considers that for years now the historiographical tradition has repeated, almost as if it were a slogan, that it was Rabbinic Judaism that invented racial prejudice against persons of colour.

On the other hand, the article published in 1997 by David M. Goldenberg (in anticipation of *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity*

¹ For a reconstruction of the episode and its consequences, see <https://www.leparisien.fr/politique/singes-et-negres-des-propos-de-sarkozy-dans-quotidien-suscitent-l-indignation-11-09-2020-8382717.php> (Accessed: 20.09.21); <https://www.archyde.com/monkeys-and-negroes-sarkozy-attracts-lightning-on-the-left/> (Accessed: 20.09.21).

² <https://abcnews.go.com/International/israeli-rabbi-fire-calling-black-people-monkeys/story?id=53929608> (Accessed: 24.09.21).

and *Islam*, published in 2003) would be enough to question a possible reversal of course.³ Through an accurate review of the studies (or presumed to be such) on the subject, Goldenberg demonstrates in his book how behind the *sordid drama* – the farce that claims to trace to the Talmud the origins of racial sentiment – there are only tall tales, which time then crystallised and transformed into irrefutable truths. It is undeniable, nevertheless, that in both the Talmud and the Midrash, there are stories referring to dark skin, or even identifying in dark skin a divine punishment.⁴ But to glean racial implications from such references would mean, according to Goldenberg, intentionally going far beyond the simple preference given by the rabbis to a somatic norm, which is represented by the light colour of their skin.⁵

Moreover, the blessing contained in the Talmud (BT, Berachòt 58b 8) seems to lead exactly in this direction, which is to recognise within the natural course of things, unusual, rare or unfamiliar phenomena:

The Gemara continues to discuss the obligation to recite a blessing over unusual phenomena. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: One who sees spotted people recites: Blessed ... Who makes creatures different. The Gemara raises a challenge: One who saw a person with unusually black skin, a person with unusually red skin, a person with unusually white skin, an unusually tall and thin person, a dwarf, or one with warts recites: Blessed ... Who makes

3 See David M. Goldenberg, "The Curse of Ham: A Case of Rabbinic Racism?," in *Struggles in the Promised Land*, ed. Jack Salzman and Cornel West (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 21–51; and David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), part I.

4 On the idea of blackness as a metaphor for sin, see especially the cases of Rabbinic exegeses cited by David M. Goldenberg, in "Racism, Color Symbolism, and Color Prejudice," in *The Origins of Racism in the West*, ed. Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac, and Joseph Ziegler (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 93–94.

5 Goldenberg, "The Curse of Ham," 32: "[T]he rabbis had an aesthetic preference for their own skin color. There is no denying this, but such a universal ethnocentric attitude is far from the anti-Black perspective which is alleged. Reflecting neither animus nor racism, the ancient Jewish stories explain the variety of human color, while implicitly favoring the somatic norm of the writers." Abraham Melamed's position is quite different: see *The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture: A History of the Other* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 61–62, which underlines how in rabbinic literature of late antiquity there was a significant change of approach to people of colour: "While most biblical references are neutral or positive, in the rabbinic and later texts there is a clear tendency towards negative value judgements about the black and about anyone whose skin is significantly darker than the norm." I'll confine myself here to remarking that, in a scathing review, Goldenberg blasts Melamed's interpretation of rabbinic culture as amateurish, historically uninformed, and methodologically unsophisticated: David M. Goldenberg, "The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture," review of *The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture: A History of the Other* by Abraham Melamed, *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 93:3–4 (2003): 559–560.

creatures different. ... The Sages taught: One who sees an elephant, a monkey [חֵקִי], or a vulture (Rashi) recites: Blessed ... Who makes creatures different. One who saw beautiful or otherwise outstanding creatures or beautiful trees recites: Blessed ... Who has such things in His world.⁶

There is no identification here between black people and monkeys: they are counted in the same blessing only insofar as they provide concrete evidence of the variety of creation – the former (black people) through the rarity they share, in a reference which is anything but negative, with tan coloured persons and albinos, the latter (monkeys) through their constitution, which distinguishes them from other animals.

Considering that, to the best of my knowledge, this is the only passage in the Talmud where monkeys make an appearance, it does not seem rash to say that what has long been looked for is missing here. But is it really enough to prove Goldenberg right in his brave attempt to dissociate racial prejudice from rabbinic tradition?

In this chapter, I will discuss the issue through one of the main (or rather, without any exaggeration, *the* main) representative of medieval Jewish thought, Moses Maimonides (1135–1204), known to the Jewish world by the acronym RAMBAM, rabbi Mosheh ben Maymon. I will do so by starting with Chapter 51 of Part III in the *Guide of the Perplexed*, which the aforementioned history of historiography has long used to support the idea of the rabbinic origin of racism, even to identify it as the birthplace of racial prejudice in Western thought.⁷

1 Guide of the Perplexed and Chapter 51 of Part III

Written between 1180 and 1190, the *Guide of the Perplexed* – in the original Arabic title *Dalālat al-ḥā'irīn* – in all three of its parts seeks to guide Jews who know

⁶ <https://www.sefaria.org/Berakhot.58b.8?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en/> (Accessed: 25.09.21).

⁷ Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press; Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1996), 111–112, writes that in this chapter of the *Guide* we are faced with “the first time in Western thought that people are described as ... not human.” According to David M. Goldenberg, “The Development of the Idea of Race: Classical Paradigms and Medieval Elaborations,” review of *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* by Ivan Hannaford, *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 5:4 (1999): 566, Hannaford is wrong to isolate the chapter from its diachronic and synchronic framework, and for claiming it is “a revolutionary turning point in the development of racism.”

both the Law and Aristotelian philosophy (the perplexed evoked in the title, to be precise) out of a paralysing doubt – that of the real possibility of reconciling these apparently contradictory domains. For Maimonides, the remedy lies in showing that Jewish religious traditions, on the one hand, and Aristotelian doctrines, on the other, do not constitute antithetical paths; rather, they lead to the same results, as long as one goes beyond the purely literal level of the sacred texts, so as to grasp the allegorical or hidden meaning, which is entirely compatible with philosophical teachings.

Thus, the first part of the *Guide* is essentially exegetical in nature (i.e., aimed at the rational explanation of the most difficult terms contained in the prophetic books), followed in the second part by an examination of the great cosmological and theological questions (the origin of the universe and prophecy), while the third and final part deals with the theme of providence and the rational interpretation of the precepts and acts of worship in Jewish religious traditions.

Right at the end of this complex arrangement of Jewish precepts (and so, at the end of the *Guide* itself), Maimonides expresses a fundamental thesis, according to which the only true act of worship consists in intellectually loving God, so that one deserves His providential gaze in direct proportion to the closeness one establishes with Him.⁸

To anticipate the above thesis is the story of Job recounted in the *Guide*: Maimonides had already taught a few chapters earlier (III, 22–23) that even a man who is perfect in his actions and fearful of sin can experience enormous misfortunes, without – in appearance at least – any fault of his own making these inevitable. Yet there is a fault in Job, and it is the profound ignorance which accompanies him, the fact that he does not recognise the equivocal nature of the term ‘providence.’ Only when he acquires a new form of knowledge and has freed himself from the intellectual (not moral) error that had even led him to disagree with God, will Job achieve true happiness, which does not pertain to what can be taken away, but is consequential on intellectual perfection (intellectual perfection becomes, in other words, an indispensable prerequisite for God’s exercise of providence).⁹

⁸ Among the most recent contributions to the topic, see Don Seeman, “Reasons for the Commandments as Contemplative Practice in Maimonides,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 103:3 (2013): 298–327.

⁹ Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, vol. 2, ed. Shlomo Pines (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1963), III, 23, 492–497: “However, Job said all that he did say as long as he had no true knowledge and knew the deity only because of his acceptance of authority, just as the multitude adhering to a Law know it. But when he knew God with a certain knowledge, he admitted that true happiness, which is the knowledge of the deity, is guaranteed to all

Through Job, Maimonides takes the reader to the heart of the matter, which is represented in Chapter 51, Part III, by the possibility of separating men into different categories according to their greater or lesser intellectual proximity to God. The distinction is made through the famous (and often misunderstood) parable of the royal palace:

The ruler is in his palace, and all his subjects are partly within the city and partly outside the city. Of those who are within the city, some have turned their backs upon the ruler's habitation, their faces being turned another way. Others seek to reach the ruler's habitation, turn toward it, and desire to enter it and to stand before him, but up to now they have not yet seen the wall of the habitation. Some of those who seek to reach it have come up to the habitation and walk around it searching for its gate. Some of them have entered the gate and walk about in the antechambers. Some of them have entered the inner court of the habitation and have come to be with the king, in one and the same place with him, namely, in the ruler's habitation. But their having come into the inner part of the habitation does not mean that they see the ruler or speak to him. For after their coming into the inner part of the habitation, it is indispensable that they should make another effort; then they will be in the presence of the ruler, see him from afar or from nearby, or hear the ruler's speech or speak to him.¹⁰

More than the parable, already interesting in itself for the variety of characters that populate it, what intrigues us here is the explanation Maimonides offers with reference to the first part:

Those who are outside the city are all human individuals who have no doctrinal belief, neither one based on speculation nor one that accepts the authority of tradition: such individuals as the furthestmost Turks found in the remote North, the Negroes found in the remote South, and those who resemble them from among them that are with us in these climes. The status of those is like that of irrational animals. To my mind they do not have the rank of men, but have among the beings a rank lower than the rank of man but higher

who know Him and that a human being cannot be troubled in it by any of all the misfortunes in question. While he had known God only through the traditional stories and not by the way of speculation, Job had imagined that the things thought to be happiness, such as health, wealth, and children, are the ultimate goal. For this reason he fell into such perplexity and said such things as he did. ... If man knows this, every misfortune will be borne lightly by him. And misfortunes will not add to his doubts regarding the deity and whether He does or does not know and whether He exercises providence or manifests neglect, but will, on the contrary, add to his love, as is said in the conclusion of the prophetic revelation in question: 'Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent of dust and ashes.'" On the topic, see Leonard S. Kravitz, "Maimonides and Job: An Inquiry as to the Method of the 'Moreh,'" *Hebrew Union College Annual* 38 (1967): 149–158; and Jason Kalman, "Job the Patient/Maimonides the Physician: A Case Study in the Unity of Maimonides' Thought," *Association for Jewish Studies* 32:1 (2008): 117–140.

10 Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, III, 51, 618.

than the rank of the apes. For they have the external shape and lineaments of a man and a faculty of discernment that is superior to that of the apes. Those who are within the city, but have turned their backs upon the ruler's habitation, are people who have opinions and are engaged in speculation, but who have adopted incorrect opinions either because of some great error that befell them in the course of their speculation or because of their following the traditional authority of one who had fallen into error. Accordingly because of these opinions, the more these people walk, the greater is their distance from the ruler's habitation. And they are far worse than the first. They are those concerning whom necessity at certain times impels killing them and blotting out the traces of their opinions lest they should lead astray the ways of others.¹¹

In the above decoding of the first section of the parable, some elements deserve to be noted more than others. The first element already betrays on a linguistic level all the difficulty, or embarrassment, of the passage, through the various attempts made to render 'blacks.'

The term *sūdānim* used by Maimonides in the original Judeo-Arabic, and then the term *Kushim* by Samuel Ibn Tibbon in the Hebrew translation of the *Guide*, refer to a generic (but semantically specific) geographical region designating the inhabitants to the south (הַכּוּשִׁיִּים הַמְשׁוּטָטִים בַּדְרוֹם).¹²

To mention the most striking cases of rendering the term: the Latin version, which was completed during the thirteenth century, most probably at the court of Frederick II, uses 'Aethiopes' (*qui morantur in plagua meridionali*),¹³ as does the first vernacular version, in the fifteenth century, by Pedro of Toledo, who

11 Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, III, 51, 618–619.

12 For a history of the term, see David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, part I, ch. 1: the term 'Kush' recurs in the Hebrew Bible, with reference to Black Africa and its people. In modern translations of the Bible, we often find the terms 'Ethiopia' and 'Ethiopian,' which go back to the early Greek and Latin translations of the original Hebrew. See also Melamed, *The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture*, 53–59. As for the use of the term in the *Guide*, it is worth noting that "Maimonides, however, does not mention just what kind of climate in the south is inhabited by these blacks ... From what he says, we know only that in this zone, as in the far north, the climate is difficult and extreme, unlike the moderate one" (Melamed, *The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture*, 13).

13 Moses Maimonides, *Dux neutrorum seu Dubiorum* (Paris, 1520), III, f. CXr. On the Latin translation of the *Guide*, see Gad Freudenthal, "Pour le dossier de la traduction latine médiévale du *Guide des Égarés*," *Revue des Études Juives* 148 (1988): 167–172; Mauro Zonta, "Traduzioni e commenti alla *Guida dei perplessi* e i loro rapporti con la tradizione ebraica," in *Maimonide e il suo tempo*, ed. Geri Cerchia and Giovanni Rota (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2007), 51–60; and Görges K. Hasselhoff, "The Reception of Maimonides in the Latin World: The Evidence of the Latin Translation in the 13–15th Century," *Materia Giudaica* 6 (2001): 258–280.

was also translating from the Hebrew text of the *Guide*.¹⁴ When Salomon Munk published his French translation in 1866, he used 'nègres.' Michael Friedländer, on the other hand, confined himself to a simple transcription from Hebrew – with the nonsensical *Kushites* (understandable only to those familiar with Hebrew or with Jewish culture) – in his pioneering English translation of the *Guide*, which first appeared in 1881. More biased, or less neutral, was Shlomo Pines's choice of 'Negroes' in his later English translation of 1963, which was then renewed in 2003 by Mauro Zonta himself with the Italian 'Negri.'

Whether they are called 'Ethiopians,' 'Kushites,' or 'Negroes,' for Maimonides they are, like the Northern Turks, outside the city walls: they are outside because, lacking any kind of faith (be it philosophical or religious), they share with animals the condition of irrational beings. To be more precise, as Maimonides himself is they are placed in an intermediate space between men and apes, being below the former from an intellectual point of view, and above the latter from a physical point of view ("they have the external shape and lineaments of a man and a faculty of discernment that is superior to that of the apes"). In short, they have not activated the rational faculty, which would have elevated them to the rank of humans, with the result that they rise above the rank of apes only by reason of a more sophisticated use of the simple faculty of discernment.¹⁵

14 I am grateful to Prof. José Antonio Fernández López, editor of the first version of the *Guide* in Spanish by Pedro da Toledo, for this indication. On the translation in question, see José Antonio Fernández López, "*Mostrador e enseñador de los turbados*. Notas sobre el primer romanceado de la *Guía de perplejos*," *Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía* 28 (2011): 39–70; and Luis M. Girón Negrón, "Pedro de Toledo's *Mostrador e enseñador de los turbados*: The Christian Reception of Maimonides' *Guide* in Fifteenth-Century Spain," in *Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed in Translation: A History from the Thirteenth Century to the Twentieth*, ed. Josef Stern, James T. Robinson, and Yonatan Shemes (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 141–180.

15 On the faculty of discernment (Arabic *al-tamyīz*), which lets one distinguish good from evil, as opposed to the intellect, which knows true from false, see Steven Harvey, "A New Islamic Source of the *Guide of the Perplexed*," in *Maimonidean Studies*, edited by Arthur Hyman, vol. 2 (New York: The Michael Scharf Publication Trust of Yeshiva University Press, 1991), 42–46. He significantly concludes: "[T]o the extent that man focuses upon the *ma'qūlāt* (i.e., things of the intellect), he draws near to God and highest human perfection; to the extent that he is absorbed in the *mashhūrāt* (i.e. generally accepted things), he draws away from God and approaches the rank of the other animals" (44).

2 Accusation of Racism

Now, it is all too clear that the judgement on Negroes, like that on Turks, is by no means benevolent: the absence of any doctrinal or religious affiliation is the seal of their irrationality. But is there really a racist orientation in this? In other words, can one cry out in scandal because the undisputed authority of the Jewish people has uttered sentences worthy of an intolerant bigot?

Maimonides is not, however, equating black men with apes. Instead, what he is doing is tracing their distinguishing feature (irrationality) to the climate to which they belong, according to an operation that was not at all unusual for the time,¹⁶ and indeed made so much their own by the Jews that it was used 'at will': the idea of a correspondence between an inhabited quadrant and the temperament of its inhabitants was appropriated to liken dark-skinned peoples to beasts, insofar as they were scorched by a heat so inexorable that it forced them to live like savages. Yet the same idea was adamantly rejected when its field of application was represented by the Jewish people: since they were locat-

16 See Harvey, "A New Islamic Source," 39–40, who, amongst other things, confirms in a passage in *Medical Aphorisms* by Maimonides, that the latter was familiar with the idea of the greater perfection (in intellect and in form) of the inhabitants of central climes compared to the inhabitants of distant climes. On the same topic, see Abraham Melamed, "Eretz Israel and the Climate Theory in Jewish Thought," in *Eretz Israel be-Hagut ha Yehudit be-Yemei ha-Beinayin* (*Land of Israel in Medieval Jewish Thought*), ed. Aviezer Ravitzky and Moshe Halamish (Jerusalem: Yad Yitshak Ben-Tsevi, 1991), 52–78; and again Melamed, *The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture*, 124–135, esp. 124, where one reads: "Greek medical and geographical literature on the subject, particularly the essays of Galen, were translated into Arabic in the great translation project of the eighth to the tenth centuries, and their influence was immense. ... [T]his literature concluded that blacks were naturally inferior because of the extreme climate of the region in which they lived. The theory appears in full in al Kindi, al Massoudi, ibn Sina, al Farabi, ibn Khaldun and other scholars. Jewish thinkers would follow them." Even before Maimonides, the most striking case in that sense is that of Yehudah ha-Lewi (1085–1141), whom Melamed himself mentions in these pages. In his *Book of Refutation and Proof of the Scorned Faith* (*Kitāb al-radd wa-l-dalīl fi l-dīn al-dhalīl*), better known as the *Book of Khazar* (or according to the Hebrew version, *Sefer ha-Kuzari*), we find in Chapter 1, Part 1: "Every individual on earth has his completing causes; consequently an individual with perfect causes becomes perfect, and another with imperfect causes remains imperfect, as the negro who is able to receive nothing more than the human shape and speech in its least developed form. The philosopher, however, who is equipped with the highest capacity, receives through it the advantages of disposition, intelligence and active power, so that he wants nothing to make him perfect" (Judah Hallevi, *Book of Kuzari*, trans. Hartwig Hirschfeld (New York: Pardes Publishing House, 1946), 32).

ed in the north-west of the second quadrant, they should have been consistently dominated by madness, disloyalty, and ignorance.¹⁷

Nevertheless, it is not only a matter of rooting Maimonides's discourse within a broader context, that of the transference of climate theory from ancient Greece to the Islamic territories. On closer inspection, it turns out that those who are inside the city, but turn their backs on the king's house, are even worse, even baser, than the men belonging to the first category (those who wander outside the city), to the point that they must be killed, so that no trace remains of the fallacious opinions they hold.¹⁸

Thus, the overall meaning seems to be that, even more serious than the failure to use the rational faculty – afflicting Turks, Negroes, and the like – is its improper, and therefore dangerous, exercise, since such recklessness risks corrupting people's souls. Moreover, two further factors show that things could not be otherwise, thus confirming the advantages, or simply the necessity, of an appropriate use of the rational faculty.

The first, still in Chapter 51, is that the parable leads step by step to the presence of the king, who is to be identified not – as perhaps too naively one tends to do – with God, but with the agent intellect. At the top of the hierarchy we find the prophets, who are indeed exceptional individuals, but not because of some unspecified supernatural prerogatives. They are exceptional, instead, because they have reached such an intellectual perfection as to be able to draw upon

17 On the reinterpretation by Yehudah ha-Cohen (born c. 1215) of the theory of correspondence between quadrants and inhabitants set out by Ptolemy in his *Tetrabiblos*, we would like to refer the reader to Marienza Benedetto, *Un enciclopedista ebreo alla corte di Federico II. Filosofia e astrologia nel Midrash ha-hokmah di Yehudah ha-Cohen* (Bari: Pagina, 2010), 159–163; and Marienza Benedetto, “A Hebrew Version of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*: The Decrees of the Stars by Judah ben Solomon ha-Cohen,” *Iberia Judaica* 7 (2015): 113–117. According to Yehudah ha-Cohen, the error regarding the characteristics of the Jewish people would have been committed, if not directly by Ptolemy, then by the copyist (guilty of not having identified all the Arabic letters), or even earlier, by the translator of the *Tetrabiblos* from Greek into Arabic (who, out of envy towards the Jews and their tradition, would have placed the Land of Israel in an ‘unhappy’ part of the world).

18 Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, III, 51, 619: “Those who are within the city, but have turned their backs upon the ruler's habitation, are people who have opinions and are engaged in speculation, but who have adopted incorrect opinions either because of some great error that befell them in the course of their speculation or because of their following the traditional authority of one who had fallen into error. Accordingly because of these opinions, the more these people walk, the greater is their distance from the ruler's habitation. And they are far worse than the first. They are those concerning whom necessity at certain times impels killing them and blotting out the traces of their opinions lest they should lead astray the ways of others.”

or recover almost instantaneously – intuitively, we might say along with Maimonides – the intelligible forms held in the agent intellect.

Indications in that sense – on the superiority of prophets and, more specifically, of true prophets – were already given in Chapter 25, Part II, of the *Guide*: prophecy in these pages is detached from a supernatural perspective, and instead is given a completely natural explanation, so that what determines a true prophet is the perfect combination of the imaginative faculty, on the one hand, and the rational faculty, on the other. More precisely: the imaginative faculty, perfected by divine emanation to the point of knowing what will happen in the future as if it had been perceived by the senses, combines with the rational faculty; in turn, the rational faculty, which that same emanation has perfected, is enabled to know existing things as if it had knowledge of their causes and their conclusions.¹⁹

The second factor – outside the chapter in question, but easily related to what we are considering – is that Maimonides had an idea of apes that was not as reductive as one might be tempted to believe. In Chapter 25, Part III of the *Guide*, there is a detailed analysis of God's actions. Here, among the arguments used to show that, since His actions can be neither useless nor frivolous nor vain, they must necessarily be useful and good, Maimonides cites a particularly interesting one:

That anything among His actions, may He be exalted, should be frivolous is impossible, as is manifest as soon as one thinks of it. No attention should be paid to the ravings of those who deem that the ape was created in order that man should laugh at it. What led to all this was ignorance of the nature of coming-to-be and passing-away and neglect of the funda-

19 Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, II, 38, 376–377: “For the very overflow that affects the imaginative faculty – with a result of rendering it perfect so that its act brings about its giving information about what will happen and its apprehending those future events as if they were things that had been perceived by the senses and had reached the imaginative faculty from the senses – is also the overflow that renders perfect the act of the rational faculty, so that its act brings about its knowing things that are real in their existence, and it achieves this apprehension as if it had apprehended it by starting from speculative premises. This is the truth that is believed by whosoever chooses to be equitable toward himself. For all things bear witness to one another and indicate one another. This should be even more fitting for the rational faculty. For the overflow of the Active Intellect goes in its true reality only to it [that is, to the rational faculty], causing it to pass from potentiality to actuality. It is from the rational faculty that overflow comes to the imaginative faculty.” For an examination of the hierarchy within the category of prophets (more or less true depending on the faculties touched by divine emanation), we refer the reader to Marienza Benedetto, “Between Impiety and Holiness: The Art of Prophecy in Maimonides,” in *Prophecy and Prophets between 11th and 15th Century*, ed. Alessandro Palazzo and Anna Rodolfi (Florence: Sismel-ed. del Galluzzo, 2020), 101–120.

mental principle: namely, that the entire purpose consists in bringing into existence the way you see everything whose existence is possible; for His wisdom did not require in any way that it should be otherwise; for this is impossible, since matters take their course in accordance with what His wisdom requires.²⁰

The paradox here is that it is the apes themselves who reveal man's ignorance. Failing to recognise divine wisdom in the creaturely plan, man is convinced that they have been conceived for the absurd and foolish purpose of amusing him.

At this point there should no longer be any doubt that the closeness of dark-skinned humans to apes postulated in Chapter 51 does not evoke an alleged racist tendency, but is in line with an intellectual elitism Maimonides shared with many philosophers of the time.²¹ Indeed, according to an invaluable contribution by Steven Harvey, Maimonides may have borrowed it from the work of his Arab colleague Miskawayh, *Tahdhib al-Akhlāq* (*Reforming the Character*) or else from a text that directly influenced Miskawayh.²²

That the intellectual elitism is more than a mere suggestion – that it is something more well-founded, or less misplaced, than the charge of racism – seems to be demonstrated by another crucial passage in the *Guide*: the passage from Part I (Ch. 31), which apparently has little, if anything, to do with the ideal human scale and apes of Chapter 51. Yet it contains so much valuable information about intellectual perceptions that it illuminates the latter in retrospect.

It all begins with an analogy between the intellect and the senses: just like the senses (which, though they have perceptions, cannot have them from a distance), the intellect cannot perceive everything because of intrinsic and extrinsic

²⁰ Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, III, 23, 504.

²¹ We have already mentioned the widely shared climate theory of the time (see *infra*, n. 14). Surprisingly, along with it, the idea of the closeness of blacks to apes was also widely shared. For a review of authors from the Arab and Jewish Middle Ages who were its mouthpiece, see Harvey, "A New Islamic Source," 41–42, n. 31; and Goldenberg, "The Development of the Idea of Race," 566–567.

²² The closeness of Maimonides and Miskawayh is surprising. Along with the parable of the palace, it occurs in the *Tahdhib*: "The first rank in the human realm, which touches the limit of the animal realm, is the rank of the people who dwell in the farthest parts of the inhabited world both to the north and to the south, such as the remotest Turks in the country of Gog and Magog and the remotest Negroes and similar nations which are distinguished from apes to a slight degree only. The faculty of discernment and understanding grows in men until they reach the central climes where intelligence, quickness of understanding, and the ability to acquire virtues are produced in them" (Harvey, "A New Islamic Source," 37). On the possible sources for Maimonides, see also Melamed, *The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture*, 140–142.

limitations that block it.²³ It follows, depending on the degree of perception they have, that individuals of the human species are easily distinguished from one another. While a few discover a certain notion by themselves through their speculation, many others will never be able to comprehend that same notion, not even through the aid of interpretations and examples. In the midst of all this, there is a whole host of individuals who, in their desire to know the highest things, proceed amidst a great many prodigious doubts, and end up with divergent opinions.

And so we come to what interests us most. A work by Alexander of Aphrodisias preserved only in Arabic translation – *The Principles of the All According to the Opinion of Aristotle* (*Maqālah fi'l-qawl fī mabādi' al-kull alā ra'y Aristāṭālīs al-faylasūf*) – allows Maimonides to identify the causes, more or less noble, of divergence: the blind ambition to excel, which prevents man from perceiving reality as it is in itself; the subtlety of the perceived object; the ignorance of the perceiving subject. The list is supplemented by a further cause, unknown at the time of Alexander of Aphrodisias, namely habit, which keeps men anchored to what is most familiar to them. Just think – Maimonides adds – of the people of the desert:

... notwithstanding the disorderliness of their life, the lack of pleasures, and the scarcity of food – dislike the towns, do not hanker after their pleasures, and prefer the bad circumstances to which they are accustomed to good ones to which they are not accustomed. Their souls accordingly would find no repose in living in palaces, in wearing silk clothes, and in the enjoyment of baths, ointments, and perfumes.²⁴

The case cited by Maimonides, and the terms used, are certainly not the happiest: the people of the desert are dirty, have bad habits and a chaotic lifestyle, as well as lacking in comforts. A tendentious and forced reading of the passage would easily confirm Maimonides's discriminatory approach towards 'foreigners,' were it not for the fact that, in order to avert the danger, we find immediately afterwards: "man has love for, and the wish to defend, opinions to which he is

²³ One can read as much from the opening lines of Chapter 31, Part I, of the *Guide*. The theme is, nevertheless, taken up and further explored in Chapter 34, Part I, in which Maimonides lists the five causes that prevent the common people, or uninitiated, from accessing the deepest truths, "just as a small baby is prevented from taking coarse foods and from lifting heavy weights": Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, vol. 1, ed. Shlomo Pines (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1963), I, 34, 79.

²⁴ Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, I, 31, 67.

habituated and in which he has been brought up and has a feeling of repulsion for opinions other than those."²⁵

Maimonides is not here normalising distrust of the Other. On the contrary, he is acknowledging all the complexity of diversity: it is indeed allegiance to one's own upbringing and opinions that blinds us, precluding openness to different or unknown perspectives. The implication is incontrovertible: the reason that binds the common people to the absurd idea of the corporeality of God (and similar fantasies) is the same reason why the people of the desert shy away from better living conditions, in order not to separate themselves from the brutishness they have made their own, as if it were a second skin.²⁶

Thus, if there is anything that makes it possible to hold together the above discourse on the narrowness of the intellect with Chapter 51, whence we began, without betraying Maimonides's intention (indeed, following the invitation in the introductory pages to interweave apparently unrelated chapters), it is an idea that the two parts actually share, namely that to have wild intellectual perceptions, or perceptions inadequate to one's own perceptive capacities, means being more imperfect than any 'deficient' person, more distant from the king than even those outside his city.²⁷

To conclude, two observations could perhaps be made. The first is that, if we really wanted to detect traces of racism in Maimonides, we should not look to the *Guide of the Perplexed*: the context in which we move here is decidedly intellectual, programmatically designed for the potential philosopher to acquire metaphysical truths by slipping between the lines of the text, beyond its surface.

More evident, or immediate, traces of racism might instead be discovered in the work that would earn him the title of leading rabbinic authority of his time, and quite possibly of all time – the *Mishneh Torah*, his fourteen-volume compendium of Jewish law, written between 1170 and 1180, not only in order to arrange all the commandments of the Torah, but also to show that every part of Jewish law serves a rational purpose and nothing is given for the sake of mere obedience.

²⁵ Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, I, 31, 67.

²⁶ Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, I, 31, 67: "All this is due to people being habituated to, and brought up on, texts that it is an established usage to think highly of and to regard as true and whose external meaning is indicative of the corporeality of God and of other imaginings with no truth in them, for these have been set forth as parables and riddles."

²⁷ Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, I, 32, 69: "you will not only not be perfect, but will be the most deficient among the deficient; and it shall so fall out that you will be overcome by imaginings and by an inclination toward things defective, evil, and wicked—this resulting from the intellect being preoccupied and its light being extinguished."

First of all, in the treatise *Hilchot Berakhot*, *The Laws of Blessings* (10, §12) of the second book of the *Mishneh Torah* (*Sefer Ahavah*, *The Book of the Love of God*), we find again, in an abbreviated form, the string of blessings that we cited at the beginning, in order to show how in the Talmud the proximity between blacks and apes was based merely on an intentional alteration or variation of the universe. Thus, of the original collection of individuals who made their uncommon appearance in the Talmudic verses (“a person with unusually black skin, a person with unusually red skin, a person with unusually white skin, an unusually tall and thin person, a dwarf, or one with warts”), significantly there remains in Maimonides the case of “a Kushite or a person who has a strange-looking face or an abnormal limb,” so as to make, among not-normally-white persons, just black people the emblem of the unusual. They are not alone, however, in Maimonides’ reconstruction, but are coupled with other cases of deformity, the emblem of the unusual, of what has been altered.²⁸

Moreover, in the third book of the *Mishneh Torah* (*Sefer Zemanim*, *The Book of Times*), in Chapter 8 (§8) of the treatise *Shofar, Sukkah, and Lulav*, Maimonides advises Jews not to use the citron (the Hebrew ‘etrog,’ the fruit used in Jewish rituals), if it is very black, like a Kushite כּוּשִׁי בִּיתוֹר כְּאֶדָם כּוּשִׁי. ²⁹ In this case, the etrog is unacceptable because of its natural imperfection; but in fact it is also unacceptable in other cases, including when the fruit is white, spotted, or green like a leek, or even simply (and surprisingly, we might add) black. The nuance in colour would seem to suggest a nuance in judgement, which should thus be revaluated, if not downsized from an immediate (and perhaps inappropriate) reference to racism. Moreover, does not the *Mishneh Torah* legitimise the marriage of Jews with Kushites who have converted to Judaism?³⁰

²⁸ On the passage, see also Melamed, *The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture*, 144–145.

²⁹ “In places where the etrogim grow naturally with a slight black tinge, it is kosher. However, if [the etrogim] are very black – i.e., like a Kushite – they are unacceptable everywhere”: https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/946106/jewish/Shofar-Sukkah-vLulav-Chapter-Eight.htm/ (Accessed: 28.09.21).

³⁰ Maimonides, *Issurei Biah*, 12, §25: “Therefore, in the present age, in all places, whenever a convert converts, whether he be an Edomite, an Egyptian, an Ammonite, a Moabite, a Kushite, or from any of the other nations, whether male or female, he or she is permitted to marry among the Jewish people immediately” (https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/960660/jewish/Issurei-Biah-Chapter-Twelve.htm/ Accessed: 28.09.21). Melamed explains that this is the only place “where there is such an egalitarian approach to the black”: permission is granted by Maimonides on the grounds that blacks constituted a very conspicuous ethnic group in Egypt at the time (Melamed, *The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture*, 146). On the topic, see also David M. Goldenberg, “It Is Permitted to Marry a Kushite,” *Association for Jewish Studies* 37:1 (2013): 29–49.

What blackness in its (supposed or real) problematic nature ends up obscuring is the fact that Maimonides actually has a severe approach, bordering on homophobia, toward a whole other people – the Samaritans (*Kutim*), traditionally in conflict with the Jews. In Book V of the *Mishneh Torah* – the *Sefer Kedushah*, the *Book of Holiness* – in Chapter 22 (§5) of the *Issurei Biah* the *Forbidden Intercourse* treatise we read that they are suspected of engaging in homosexual relations (מִפְּנֵי שֶׁכָּלֵן הַשּׂוֹדִיִּין עַל מִשְׁכָּב זָכוּר), as well as sodomising the animals that sleep beside them. And the discredit into which the Samaritans (and the Gentiles in general) are thrown is all the more profound and explicit, the more Jewish men, by contrast, are held up to praise: Jewish men are not suspected of engaging in relations either with men or with animals; indeed, they may even enter into privacy with a gentile woman, if they are accompanied by their wife (for their wife will guard them against transgression).³¹

In light of the above, it is impossible to rehabilitate Maimonides, absolving him completely of the charge of racism against the 'other.' On the other hand, we should try to avoid instrumental readings or gross generalisations, which would make the accusation definitive. As we have attempted to show, racism in some cases seems to be an ideological requirement, to be found throughout Maimonides's work, rather than a real fact.

Whichever position one assumes, there is still a fundamental error, and it matters little whether it is due to malice, ignorance, or convenience, as in our case. To cite what Abraham Melamed gives us in the introductory pages of his invaluable *The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture*, "As a complete and defined worldview, racism emerged with the development of modern anthropology in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the application of Darwin's theory to subdivisions of the human group. ... Hence, it would be anachronistic to call any premodern attitude or phenomenon 'racist,' even if it would be perceived that way through modern eyes."³² It should, more simply, be recognised that the hierarchic ethnic perception (the natural superiority of one ethnic group

31 Maimonides, *Issurei Biah*, 22, §4–5. The case of Jewish women is different; they are prohibited from entering into privacy with a gentile man even if his wife is with him: the gentile woman cannot guard her husband against transgression, since Gentiles feel no shame (https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/960670/jewish/Issurei-Biah-Chapter-Twenty-Two.htm/ Accessed: 29.09.21).

32 Melamed, *The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture*, 7–8, significantly adds: "The racist outlook is entirely a product of modern anthropology, a 'scientific' outlook sharply opposed to the perception of equality, another product of modern culture." Precisely for this reason, Melamed chose always to use the term 'racism' in quotation marks "where a more apt expression cannot be found" (8). The impossibility of speaking of racism paradoxically brings Melamed closer to Goldenberg (see *infra*, n. 5).

and the natural inferiority of another) was the normative view of the great majority of learned people.³³

The second, more general, observation to be made for the purposes of a (tentative) conclusion is that attributing the origin of racial prejudice to Jews is perhaps itself the result of racial prejudice – that which collocates Jews and Blacks together under the same grim label, as a sort of ape, or as the lowest and most despicable of humans.

Such a prejudice can be found in the author of the *Traité sur la tolérance* no less! In his *Traité de métaphysique*, published for the first time in France in 1734, Voltaire says that, once landed in Africa, he saw “des singes, des éléphants, des nègres, qui semblent tous avoir quelque lueur d’une raison imparfaite. ... Si je jugeais des choses par le premier effet qu’elles font sur moi, j’aurais du penchant à croire d’abord que de tous ces êtres c’est l’éléphant qui est l’animal raisonnable” (Ch. 1). He returns to the same topic, even increasing the dose, in *Essai sur les mœurs*, in which he expressly writes of looking at the Jews as one looks at “nègres, comme une espèce d’hommes inférieure.”³⁴

The consequences of this discourse are the dramatic ones lucidly described by Jacques Derrida in his wonderful *L’animal que donc je suis*: referring to a whole tradition which had reduced the animal to “une machine qui ne parle pas,” “une sorte de singe au parler simiesque,” Derrida recalls that it is exactly how the Nazis sought to reduce their Jewish prisoners.³⁵

In short, the chronicle of a history – made of (black or Jewish) people and apes – announced long before Sarkozy.

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³³ Melamed, *The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture*, 8.

³⁴ On Voltaire (and his sentiments regarding the Jews), see especially Léon Poliakov, “Racism in Europe,” in *Caste and Race: Comparative Approaches*, ed. Anthony de Reuck and Julie Knight (London: J. & A. Churchill, 1967), 224; and Leonard Rosmarin, “Voltaire et les Juifs,” *Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 11 (1992): 151–158.

³⁵ Jacques Derrida, *L’animal que don je suis* (Paris: Galilée, 2006), 162.

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Jukka Korpela

Chapter 4

Law without Reason: The Use of Medieval Facts as Justification for Politics in Modern Russia

Introduction

The idea that nature, the gods, and everything are subject to reason (*ratio*) is the core of the Western world view. Greek ancient philosophy and Roman jurisprudence, medieval Western Scholastic philosophy, and finally the eighteenth-century Enlightenment have cemented this idea into a universal and timeless truth. This is not, however, the situation in all cultures in history. Philosophers in the West up to the eleventh century, as well as in the East, thought that the omnipotence of God can annul reason and the laws of nature. Still today in many cultures – like in Russia – holistic, mystic rhetoric is the mainstream of political argumentation. It is not based on rationalism. The chapter compares the argumentation of Russian medieval chronicles and hagiographic texts with modern political speech.

1 The Odd West

The cult of reason, as we Westerners understand it, forms a huge principal difference between the Eastern and Western types of argumentation. When Steven Pinker declares in his recent book *Enlightenment Now: The Case of Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress* that opposing reason is, by definition, unreasonable, he is stuck within the narrow confines of the European Enlightenment.¹ There are, of course, unreasonable phenomena in the West as well as in the East, but these must be kept separate from the intellectual solutions of other cultures. Pinker's way of thinking declares only the globalization that enforced the world to adhere to Western values as universal, eternal, and the only right ones.

¹ Steven Pinker, *Enlightenment Now: The Case of Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress* (St. Ives: Allen Lane – Penguin Books, 2018), 351.

According to the Bible, man and woman became like God when they ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, because now they were able to distinguish between the two. In the Cow Sura, the Islamic interpretation stresses the secret aspect of this knowledge by stating that if you go near this tree “you will both (Adam and Eve) become wrongdoers.”² The Middle Eastern idea is that the law and truth were given to humans by God’s grace; God alone knows the truth. Humans must follow the truth (law) and not criticize, change, or suspect it.³ The great Greek innovation was to separate philosophy from religion. The scholars of the Middle East never did this.

The Greeks understood the universe as transparent to human reason (*nous*), because it was created by another reason.⁴ According to Roman philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero (d. 43 BCE), everything – humans as well as gods – was subject to natural justice, which depended on reason (*ratio*) and guided all proper laws. Greco-Roman polytheism did not allow for one omnipotent god with superior opinions that became absolute laws for everybody.⁵ For Persian philosophers God, like Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians, is the “all-wise and whole just and good,” which realizes the *asha* (“order,” “justice,” “truth”) in the universe. The idea of truth, visible only in the announcement of God, influenced much of the philosophy of late antiquity and mystery cults like Christianity.⁶

2 Gn. 2:17; 3:3–5; Qur’an, The Cow, 35.

3 Dt. 4:2; Prv. 16:10; Josef Wiesehöfer, “Law and Religion in Achaemenid Iran,” in *Law and Religion in the Eastern Mediterranean: From Antiquity to Early Islam*, ed. Anselm C. Hagedorn and Reinhard G. Krantz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 42–54; Jukka Korpela, *Die Wahrheit und die Vernunft: Der Austritt des Abendlands aus der Gemeinschaft Gottes und der Aufstieg rationaler Individuen* (manuscript; forthcoming from Brill).

4 Edward C. Halper, “*noûs*,” in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Robert Audi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 2nd ed.), 621; Lloyd P. Gerson, *Plotinus*, The Arguments of the Philosophers (London: Routledge, 1994), 42–44.

5 Cicero, *De legibus* I.6–9; Max Kaser, *Römisches Privatrecht*, Juristische Kurz-Lehrbücher (Munich: Verlag C. M. Beck, 1989, 15th ed.), 25–27; Michael Gagarin, “Law and Religion in Early Greece,” in *Law and Religion in the Eastern Mediterranean: From Antiquity to Early Islam*, ed. Anselm C. Hagedorn and Reinhard G. Krantz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 59–78.

6 Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, The Library of Religious Beliefs and Practices (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 18–24, 29, 39–59, 106–109; Michael Axworthy, *A History of Iran: Empire of the Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 5–10; Cristina d’Ancona, “Greek into Arabic: Neoplatonism in Translation,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, ed. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 10–13; Harold Tarrant, “Platonism before Plotinus,” in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, vols. 1–2, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 71–72; John J. O’Meara, “Indian Wisdom and Porphyry’s Search for a Universal Way,” in *Neoplatonism and Indian Thought*, ed. R. Baine Harris (Albany: State University of

The early medieval Christian mainstream followed the Eastern idea of the omnipotent God, greater than the Roman idea of gods tied to the laws of nature.⁷ For Petrus Damiani (d. 1072) God is not only able to work miracles and anything logically non-contradictory but indeed anything God wills at all. Not even the laws of space or time prevent this omnipotence.⁸ Dialectic argumentation (a systematic approach to theology) increasingly challenged this rhetorical tradition after the tenth century, which some scholars call “anti-dialecticians.” Berengar of Tours (d. 1088) points out that he does not “take refuge” in dialectics, which his opponents accused him of, but simply uses reason, a divine gift to human beings. Reason makes a human being an image of God, and therefore, it is a religious duty to exercise one’s own reason. Further, Peter Abelard (d. 1142) incarnated the “dialectic turn” by criticizing the Neoplatonic view about the independent existence of universal ideas.⁹

Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) maintains that since God is Being, he cannot act contrary to the nature of Being. God is rational and under the laws of nature. For Aquinas, even faith is based on reason (*fides est opinio firmata rationibus*) like the divine law and eternal law.¹⁰ The rise of Scholasticism demanded rational

New York Press, 2010), 5–25, and other essays in the anthology of Neoplatonism and Indian Thought.

7 Irvén Mihael Resnick, *Divine Power and Possibility in St. Peter Damian’s De Divina Omnipotentia*, Studien und Texte zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 31 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 1–6, 23, 32–36; Reima Välimäki, *Heresy in Late Medieval Germany: The Inquisitor Petrus Zwicker and the Waldensians*, Heresy and Inquisition in the Middle Ages 6 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: York Medieval Press, 2019), 71–74; Riku Juti, *Lyhyt metafysiikan historia* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2019), 70–74, 78, 85–87.

8 Resnick, *Divine Power and Possibility*, 1–8; Peter King, “Philosophy in the Latin Christian West: 750–1050,” in *A Companion to the Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J. E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone. Blackwell Companions to Philosophy (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 34–35; Toivo J. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology in the Eleventh Century*, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 54 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 6–15.

9 King, “Philosophy,” 34–35; Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 1–2; *Anselm Canterburylainen: Kaksi kirjoitusta Jumalan olemassaolosta: Monologion ja Proslogion*, transl., intr. and comments Toivo J. Holopainen (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2019), 14–24, 58; Juti, *Lyhyt metafysiikan historia*, 71–83, 87–91; John Marenbon, “Peter Abelard,” in *Companion to the Philosophy*, 487–492; John Marenbon, “The Emergence of Medieval Latin Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, vol. 1, ed. Robert Pasnau and Christina van Dyke (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2010), 33; Steven P. Marrone, “Medieval Philosophy in Context,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. S. McGrade (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003), 24–28; Korpela, *Die Wahrheit*.

10 Thomas Aquinas, *Liber tertius sententiarum*, d. 23, q. 2, solutio 3 (p. 255); Resnick, *Divine Power and Possibility*, 5–6, 23, 36–39; Andreas Speer, “Naturgesetz und Dekalog bei Thomas von Aquin,” in *Das Gesetz—The Law—La Loi*, ed. Andreas Speer and Guy Guldentops, Miscella-

methodology in all philosophy, putting mysticism aside from the core of the discipline, unlike in the East. The final result was the concept of mathematical measurable science in the West. This and the new sovereign power, which consumed the legal and rational philosophical arguments for politics, marginalized mysticism in Western intellectual life.¹¹

2 Another Choice: Muslim and Byzantine Scholars

Hellenistic Greek philosophy flourished outside Roman borders in the learned circles of the Middle East. According to Abu Yusuf Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi (d. 873), Greek philosophers were searching for knowledge about God like all others, and because all people have the same rational obligations, their logic is generally valid. The *mu'tazilah* rationalists (from the eighth to the tenth century) refused even to discuss divine issues. Abu 'Ali al-Husayn ibn 'Abdallah ibn Sina (also known as Avicenna, d. 1037) combined metaphysics with Islam and created a genuine Islamic philosophy, which was very close to his contemporary Christian philosophy.¹²

Ismaelian Shi'ite philosophy constructed conceptual structures influenced by Gnostic and Neoplatonic thought, which, using other words, could explain the proclamation that the Law and Prophet is the truth. They separated *falsafah* (فلسفة; philosophy, training of mind) from *hikmah* (genuine philosophy, holistic training, and meditation on being human). For Abu Ya'qub al-Sijistani (d. ca. 970) God is indefinable but not a substance; God is neither the first being but the initial reason and intellect.¹³

nea Mediaevalia 38 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 350–370. See also the essays of Isabelle Mandrelle and Nicolas Faucher in this book.

11 Christina van Dyke, "Mysticism," in *Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, vol. 2, 720–734; Marrone, "Medieval Philosophy in Context," 28–32; Korpela, *Die Wahrheit*.

12 D'Ancona, "Greek into Arabic," 14–15; Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor, "Introduction," in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 2–6; Peter Adamson, "Al-Kindi and the Reception of Greek Philosophy," in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 32–36; David C. Reisman, "Al-Fārābī and the Philosophical Curriculum," in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 52–71; Robert Wisnovsky, "Avicenna and the Avicennian Tradition," in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 92–136; Hossein Ziai, "The Illuminationist Tradition," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 465–496; Juti, *Lyhyt metafysiikan historia*, 74–78.

13 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Prolegomenon," in *Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*, vol. 2, *Isma'ili Thought in the Classical Age*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Mehdi Aminrazavi (London: I. B. Tau-

The Shari'a teacher at the Baghdad madrassa, Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (d. 1111) accused philosophers (e.g., ibn Sina), of merely trying to go around the Law with their theories.¹⁴ Al-Ghazali systematized Islamic mysticism, and after him, philosophy started to mean a mystic intuition, *gnosis* (*irfan*), which aspired to higher, suprahuman information (*hikmah*). The relation between philosophy and religion was restored to the form that it had had in Zoroastrianism.¹⁵ Shahab al-Din Yahya ibn Habash Suhrawardī (d. 1191) formed the basic lines for Illuminationism (*hikmah al-ishraq*), in which he rejected both Aristotelianism and the ontology of ibn Sina. By connecting old Persian philosophy and Neoplatonism, Suhrawardī allocated mysticism to the core of Islam.¹⁶

Hossein Ziai has noted that many modern scholars despise Illuminationism without knowing it; it was a scholarly choice and the Illuminationists tried with a scientific methodology to solve philosophical problems. The degeneration of peripatetic philosophy did not mean that philosophy had not continued in the Islamic world, nor did it herald a dark age of religious fanaticism, as many scholars, like Christopher de Bellaigue, have argued.¹⁷

Byzantine scholarship continued the Greek philosophical tradition but under strong Christian guidance. Revivals of ancient culture like the Macedonian and Paleologian periods of renaissance as well as Western learned orientations like that of Ioannes Italos (d. 1090) and Barlaam of Calabria (d. 1348) kept alive Aristotelian philosophy and even introduced some ideas of Thomas Aquinas but

ris, 2008), 1–12; Paul E. Walker, “The Ismā’īlī,” in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 72–91.

14 Most contemporary illuminationists did not respect al-Ghazali, cf. Wisnovsky, “Avicenna and the Avicennian Tradition,” 104–105, 130–131; Michael E. Marmura, “Al-Ghazālī,” in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 137, 139, 153; Sajjad H. Rizvi, “Mysticism and Philosophy: Ibn ‘Arabi and Mullā Ṣadrā,” in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 225–226; Ziai, “The Illuminationist Tradition,” 467–46; Carole Hillenbrand, *Islam: A New Historical Introduction* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2015), 189–218.

15 Rizvi, “Mysticism and Philosophy,” 225–226; Nasr, “Prolegomenon,” 6–8; Hillenbrand, *New Historical Introduction*, 175, 198–199.

16 John Walbridge, “Suhrawardī and Illuminationism,” in *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 207–208; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “The Meaning and Concept of Philosophy in Islam,” in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 21–26; Nasr, “Prolegomenon,” 2, 6–8; Hillenbrand, *New Historical Introduction*, 201–203; Ziai, “The Illuminationist Tradition,” 466–467; Hossein Ziai, *Knowledge and Illumination: A Study of Suhrawardī’s Hikmat al-Ishrāq*, Brown Judaic Studies 97 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990), *passim*.

17 Ziai, “The Illuminationist Tradition,” 465–466, 473–475; Ziai, *Knowledge and Illumination*, *passim*; Christopher de Bellaigue, *The Islamic Enlightenment: The Modern Struggle between Faith and Reason* (London: The Bodley Head, 2017), xxviii–xxxii.

could not make a “transition from theocentric to an anthropocentric universe” like in the West: hesychastic doctrine established mystic contemplation at the core of the intellectual life of Byzantium in the middle of the fourteenth century.¹⁸

It is easy to find rhetorical formulation and calligraphic presentation in Western scholarly speech and writing, but they are only outer forms. While the method of presentation was excluded from rational argumentation in the West, in the East the holistic approach kept metaphoric and symbolic rhetoric, and even the calligraphic, as a part of argumentation and knowledge.¹⁹

3 Sacral Mission against Western Crusade

The twelfth-century Kievan primary chronicle describes the baptism of Prince Vladimir Svyatoslavich (d. 1015) in the 980s. Foreign missionaries tried to assure Vladimir of the superiority of Muslim, Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Byzantine Orthodox religion. The chronicler compared Roman and Byzantine argumentation. While the former was boring without any beauty, the latter was marvelous and beautiful. The text prefers holistic argumentation over rising rationalism.²⁰

Since late medieval times, Russian national rhetoric has based its legitimization of political actions on visions of the heritage of the ancient Kievan realm and the Orthodox Church. These mystic visions are formed in a patriotic and hagiographic literature which has little to do with professional history research. Over the centuries, this concept has formed the core of Russian identity and church teaching. Also today, real arguments are not focused on facts in accordance with the principles of Western science but on rhetorical phantasies.²¹

18 Andreas Andreopoulos, *Metamorphosis: The Transfiguration in Byzantine Theology and Iconography* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005), 209–225; Hillenbrand, *New Historical Introduction*, 191–193, 200–201; Holopainen, *Canterburylainen*, 31.

19 Jaakko Husa, *Bysantin oikeushistoria: Johdatus itäroomalaiseen oikeuskulttuuriin*, Suomalaisen lakimiesyhdistyksen julkaisuja, E-series no. 25 (Helsinki: Suomalainen lakimiesyhdistys, 2013), 125; Andreopoulos, *Metamorphosis*, 11–13, passim; David Wagschal, *Law and Legality in the Greek East: The Byzantine Canonical Tradition, 381–883*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 84–86, 122–125.

20 *Povest' vremennykh let*, 6494 (986)–6495 (987).

21 Jukka Korpela, “Holy Russia: The Image of a Thousand-Year-Old Russia as a Tool in Governance,” in *Fifteen Years into the 21st Century: Upheavals in Societies and Religions in the Light of Political and Cultural Challenges*, ed. Gerhard Beiser and Hubert Seiwert (Berlin: Lit. Verlag, 2015), 209–234; Jukka Korpela, “Russia's Religious Empire, non-Rational Power and Pussy

In his speech to the Federal Assembly of Russia on December 4, 2014, President Vladimir Putin declared: “It was in Crimea, in the ancient city of Chersonesus, ... that Grand Prince Vladimir was baptized before bringing Christianity to Rus. ... Christianity was a powerful spiritual unifying force that helped involve various tribes and tribal unions of the vast Eastern Slavic world in the creation of a Russian nation and Russian state.” This was Putin’s legitimization for the conquest of Crimea in 2014.²²

The relics of St. Vladimir “traveled” through Russia in the millennium year of his death, 2015, and people participated in the cult in the main cathedrals of Russia. While the huge St. Vladimir statue of 1853 in Kiev symbolizes victorious Russian Orthodox rule and the brotherhood of East Slavic tribes, the new St. Vladimir statue of 2016, just outside of the Moscow Kremlin, declares the restoring of Russia in Ukraine.

This rhetoric continues in Russian criticism of the West. Patriarch Kirill warned on January 28, 2013 that by rejecting the Orthodox faith, Russia would cease to exist. The adoption of Western pluralism was his biggest concern. In his sermon in the Moscow Cathedral of the Savior on Reconciliation Sunday (March 6, 2022) the Patriarch declared that the war in Ukraine was a defensive fight against the expansion of Western values like Pride parades and homosexuality. This was not the speech of a religious leader but part of the political legitimization message of the state, because the Russian church and the state form a unity (symphony, see below). The cathedral was not only a church but the official site of a state cult; that was why Pussy Riot made their protest against President Putin here on February 21, 2012.²³

The late fifteenth-century Moscow Chronicle narrates how the grand prince Ivan started the war against Novgorod in 1471 by visiting the holy places and relics of all saints and his ancestors in Moscow to pray for victory of the Orthodox faith over Latin heretics. Metropolitan Philipp blessed the grand prince for his

Riot,” in *Limitations of Religious Freedom by Privileged State Religions (Ecclesiae): Particularly in Authoritarian States but also in Democracies*, ed. Gerhard Besier (Berlin: Lit. Verlag, 2020), 77–92.

²² <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/23341> (accessed 17 February 2021) (the official Kremlin translation); Korpela “Holy Russia,” 209.

²³ <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=documents&div=218> (accessed 17 February 2021); <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6007> (accessed 17 February 2021); <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/russlands-patriarch-ukraine-krieg-als-kampf-gegen-die-suende-17858790.html?GEPC=s5> (accessed 17 February 2021); Korpela, “Russia’s Religious Empire,” 77–78, 87–88.

mission like Samuel did David for his fight against Goliath. The pictures of the mid-sixteenth-century Image Chronicle describe this mystic holy war.²⁴

On the eve of the Kazan War in 1552, Metropolitan Makariy stressed in his letter to Tsar Ivan IV how preserving the chastity of Christian marriage had been the reason for the success and victories of all Russian rulers from St. Vladimir to “Your divinely crowned Emperor.” Following “the Divine Law and true Orthodox faith” correctly had been decisive for the success of all Russian tsars. After the victory, the Metropolitan stressed the religious character of the war and the holy deed of the Tsar which he compared to the victories of Constantine the Great, St. Vladimir of Kiev, St. Aleksandr Nevskiy, and Dmitri Donskoy over the enemies of true Christianity.²⁵ The Image Chronicle describes the Kazan conflict absolutely as a holy war. The Tsar visited holy places and relics, the Metropolitan blessed the mission, an image of the Tsar like an icon of Christos Pantocrator was presented to him in Kazan, the Kazan town was blessed after the conquest, and narration in the chronicle of the entire war was like a church liturgy.²⁶

The concept of holy war is based on stories in the Hebrew Bible (Dt 2:34; 3:6; Ios 6:21; 8:25–26) that describe the utter destruction of all pagans as a representation of the ire of God (theology of *herem*). Although the Jews had put the idea aside, the Scriptures served as an inspiration for both Christian and Islamic extremists. The mid-fourth-century Roman astrologist Firmicius Maternus declared that the destruction of pagan cults was the holy obligation of the emperor. According to James Turner Johnson, modern Western thought is alone in denying the legitimacy of holy wars.²⁷ Today, there is still a clear difference between the character of religious wars in the East and West. The late eleventh-century First Crusade was the last Western “holy war.” After that religion has been a part of wars, but only as grounds for extending or reducing rulers’ power. In the East, the ideology of holy war has long remained the core reason, mission, and true part of military actions.²⁸

The idea of the Holy War as an obligation to protect the Fatherland without any rational grounds or without taking consideration of possible losses has sur-

24 Moskovskiy letopisnyy svod, 6977 (1469) (l. 400ob.–402), *Litseyoy letopisnyy svod*, Kniga 15, 192–202.

25 Patriarshaya ili Nikonovskaya letopis’, 7061 (1553).

26 *Litseyoy letopisnyy svod*, Kniga 21, 180–504, and especially, 180–199, 455, 467–471, 478, 498.

27 James Turner Johnson, *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 1–2, 31, 33–34, 37–42, 86, passim; Victoria Ukolova, *The Last of the Romans and European Culture: Man through the Ages* (Moscow: Progress, 1989), 95.

28 Pinker, *Enlightenment Now*, 163–164.

vived in the Russian rhetoric until today. This is genuinely used as argumentation and not only decorative speech. The Moscow Cathedral of the Savior, which was re-erected in the 2000s and is the site of state ceremonies today, declares the argumentation of the Russian power as a millennium-old tradition starting from St. Vladimir of Kiev. This message continues in the cathedral of the Russian army, which was completed in Kubinka in 2020. Mosaics represent key Russian military leaders during history including Josef Stalin (d. 1953). According to the original plan, Vladimir Putin and the “re-unification” of Crimea were presented as well. Museum exhibitions and cultural activities preach for the same mission everywhere in Russia. New place names support this holistic feeling for the eternal mission of the great ruler. The Crimean port of Kerch has lately taken on the status of *Sviatoapostolskiy* (Holy Apostolic) town. This kind of political argumentation is not only modern, nineteenth-century nationalism, or a revival of cultural and religious life, but much older. Ivan IV’s conquest of Kazan in 1552 was presented in the Icon of the Blessed Host of the Heavenly Emperor in the Moscow Kremlin Church of the Dormition. Here the army of the Tsar is accompanied by the heavenly host headed by princely saints Vladimir Svyatoslavich, Boris and Gleb, Aleksandr Nevskiy and Dmitri Donskoy.²⁹

Besides St. Vladimir Svyatoslavich, St. Aleksandr Nevskiy (d. 1263), the great hero of anti-Western aggressions, has been a popular reference for Russian rulers. Peter the Great, who defeated the Swedish Empire in the Great Northern War (1700–1721), and Josef Stalin, who beat Adolf Hitler (d. 1945), allowed themselves to be compared with Aleksandr. The cult of such political reincarnations has a solid Byzantine background. The messages may be combined: in 2015 the Vladimir relics were exposed in the Cathedral of St. Aleksandr Nevskiy in St. Petersburg, to show how criticism against Vladimir (the conquest of Crimea) is Western aggression, which Aleksandr will beat. President Putin has had a Church of St. Vladimir built near his cottage on the archipelago of Valaam.³⁰

Sacralization of the ruler of Russia is essential because the religion legitimizes the rule and God’s grace guides the ruler. Today, Russia’s ruler is still the head of the empire, who represents the universal power and justice of the

29 Jukka Korpela, *Prince, Saint and Apostle: Prince Vladimir Svjatoslavič of Kiev, His Posthumous Life, and the Religious Legitimization of the Russian Great Power* (Stuttgart: Otto Harrassowitz, 2001), 207.

30 Korpela, *Prince, Saint and Apostle*, 92–94, 188–190; Mari Isoaho, *The Image of Aleksandr Nevskiy in Medieval Russia: Warrior and Saint*, *The Northern World* 21 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 376–377; Paul Magdalino, “Introduction,” in *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries*, ed. Paul Magdalino, *Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies* 2 (Cambridge: Ashgate Variorum, 1994), 3–9. See also other articles in the anthology.

God and is therefore the good shepherd above the laws. Therefore, rulers play a permanent role in church proceedings: President Putin was at the airport welcoming the cincture of the Mother of God on loan from Mount Athos in October 2011. This should not be compared to official church ceremonies in the West, because they are only ceremonies. In the East, the proceedings do not illustrate but incarnate the idea of symphony (the co-rule of emperor and church) which originates from the fourth-century empire of Constantine the Great and was written down in concrete law in the mid-sixth century in the Justinian's *Novellae* (§ 6). Ivan IV took it into his imperial law of Stoglav in 1551, and Dmitri Medvedev (president 2008–2012) declared this the ruling model of the Russian Federation in 2012. The wall paintings of the Moscow Cathedral of the Savior present how symphony has guided the Russian people since the baptism of St. Vladimir. In Russia, the ruler realizes the omnipotence of God, may or may not allow divine grace to work, but is not under laws or tied to a democratic system.³¹

According to Russian historical narrative, the ruler's honor (*slava*) constitutes their reliability, authority, and legitimacy. A great leader is fearsome and has *groza*, huge authority. Criticism of the ruler is a sin! The two concepts, *slava* and *groza*, legitimize the ruler's position better than any constitutions or single laws, because they show that the ruler is the God-given shepherd of the people. Therefore, the premodern Muscovite rulers mocked Western sovereign rulers as "self- or man-crowned kings." Western misunderstanding about the system is clearly visible here. Ivan IV was one of the mightiest Russian rulers. His nickname was *groznyy*, which stressed his strong *groza*. Western historians, however, have translated the name as Ivan the Terrible!³²

All this is comprehensible for the Eastern but not for the Western mind. Therefore, it is a mistake to skip these explanations only as rhetorical decorations of rational explanation. Doing so, we do not see the core reason why the new Constitution of 2020 protects the correct interpretation of Russian history – it is an essential part of state legitimacy and its political argumentation.

31 <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=8860> (accessed 17 February 2021); cf. Adele Marie Barker, "Rereading Russia," in *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society since Gorbachev*, ed. Adele Marie Barker (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1999), 4; Graeme Gill, *Symbolism and Regime Change in Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 200–201.

32 Charles J. Halperin, "The Metamorphosis of Ivan IV into Ivan the Terrible," in *Miscellanea Slavica: Sbornik statey k 70-letiyu Borisa Andreevicha Uspenskogo*, ed. F. B. Uspenskiy (Moscow: Indrik 2008), 379–397; Jaakko Lehtovirta, *Ivan IV as Emperor: The Imperial Theme in the Establishment of Muscovite Tsardom* (Turku: Painosalama, 1999), 239–243.

4 Dangerous Knowledge Disrupts Harmony

As said, the Eastern idea of the truth is based on the secret omnipotence of God. The truth is not transparent and understandable and therefore not rational, while rationality and transparency are the core ideas of Western truth. Therefore, the Bible's story of the expulsion from paradise is absurd from the Western, but understandable from the Eastern perspective.

In the Russian language there are many expressions for the description of the truth and the truthfulness of proceedings: aside from pure lies or pure truth they can also denote something between these two extremes (*ложь – неправда – враньё*) – (*правда – истина*). The idea of the truth is the secure and safe of the god and thus it is equivalent with law, which has nothing to do with the banal Latin expression *lex*. The supreme value of Russian society is *sobornost'*, which means the unanimity of the collective. *Sobornost'* prevails in Russian society, which is called *mir*. This complicated concept means village society, the world, and peace. It is very close to the Arabic expression *umma*. “Wrong learning” is dangerous because it splits unity. Therefore, ideological unanimity is the supreme value.

The Kievan Chronicle starts with the famous last words of Grand Prince Jaroslav the Wise to his sons in 1054. The prince urged them to love each other (*v lyubvi mezhyu soboyu*) so they would succeed (*bog budet v vas*), but if they started to live in hate (*v raspryakh*), they would destroy themselves and their realm (*pogybnete sami i pogubite zemlyu*). The Devil loves civil wars (*usobnaya zhe rat' byvaet' ot soblazhenenya d'yavolya*), and created discord between the brothers (*raspri mezhi imi*) in 1073, and a period of war started. Princes fought against each other and invited “pagans” (*poganyya*; in fact, Muslim Polovtsy) to participate in raiding. They tried to make peace occasionally, but the Devil did not like the idea (*tokto d'yavol pechalen byashe o lyubvi sey*). The chaos culminated in the blinding of Prince Vasil'ko in 1097, what the chronicler calls “evil” that has never existed in Rus' (*sego ne byvalo est – – syakogo zla*). Bishops appealed to the fighting princes to put a halt to their discord, or else they would destroy the land and give it to the pagans.³³

This eleventh-century approach to symphony continued in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Similarly, Bishop Dionisiy of Suzdal was ordered to teach the “correct Divine Law” (*pouchaya zakonu bozhiyu – – pravovernii vere istinnii*) to the Novgorodians in 1382, because the “devilish learnings” of “evil people” had caused turmoil (*utverdil nesmushcheno ot zlykh chelovek diavo-*

33 *Povest' vremennykh let*, 6562 (1054), 6576 (1068), 6581 (1073), 6605 (1097).

lom naushchenym) during the last few years. Unity of teaching was also connected to the Novgorod war of 1471, because Novgorodians had given up their Orthodox faith for Roman Catholicism (*nachasha otstupati k latynstvu*), so the grand prince treated them not as Christians but as pagans and renegades (*yako na in-oyazychnik i na otstupnik pravoslavia*).³⁴

The border of *mir* (peace within the realm) is called *rubezh* and beyond the *rubezh* is an unknown, frightening land of hostile, heretic foreigners. To be abroad is in Russian *za rubezhom*, which is dangerous, because the foreign is the source of wrong teaching. Returning to the Kievan Chronicle (year 1068), foreigners, especially pagans' invasions, are God's punishment for "our sins" (*inoplemen'nitsi; kaznit' bog – – naveden'em poganykh*). Today NGOs with contacts abroad are obliged to register as foreign agents, because they can transmit ideas and teachings different from the truth. The danger is not the single words or learnings but the potential break up of harmony.³⁵

Raskol' means controversy and is the utter bad that destroys *sobornost'*. President Boris Yeltsin (d. 2007) called the October Revolution of 1917 *raskol'*. In the same spirit, Metropolitan of St. Petersburg Ioann Snychev (d. 1995) called the Soviet Union "the second and big *smuta*" (time of troubles), referring to the traditional name for the chaos of the early seventeenth century. According to him, both the metropolitan united church teaching of Slavophilic patriotism and the interpretation of Soviet history have highlighted the brave Russians, who, throughout history, have only defended the Fatherland and its principles against Western aggressive "crusading." This message against Western expansion is today clear, but far from new – it has been part of argumentation since the Middle Ages.³⁶

The idea that the universal imperial mission for true Christianity is the legacy of the united Slavic nation of St. Vladimir was already present in the early fifteenth-century Muscovite Trinity Chronicle (*Troitskaya letopis'*). The idea that great figures in Muscovite history have conducted a mission against heresy was also the message of Metropolitan Makariy to Tsar Ivan IV in 1552. In the meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club on September 19, 2013, President Putin accused Western countries of rejecting Christian values, which "con-

³⁴ Novgorodskaya pervaya letopis' mladshogo izvoda; Patriarshaya ili Nikonovskaya letopis' 6890 (1382); Moskovskiy letopisnyy svod, 6977 (1469, l. 402–402ob.).

³⁵ *Povest' vremennykh let*, 6576 (1068); Korpela, "Holy Russia," 230.

³⁶ Mitropolit Ioann (Snychev), *Bitva za Rossiyu* (Simferopol': Rodnoe slovo, 2018), passim; Korpela, "Holy Russia," 228–231.

stitute the basis for civilization. They are implementing policies that equate large families with same-sex partnership, belief in God with the belief in Satan.”³⁷

Not only foreigners cause *raskol'* but also individuals, if they seek their own interests. Therefore, the Western type of individual argumentation does not prove anything about the truth. Obedience is essential in the Eastern procedure of learning and teaching, while suspicion represents only impolite behavior, indiscipline, and contempt for authority. True learning, which is based on the tradition and its authorities, is the guarantee of harmony, which prevails in *sobornost'* and proves truth.

Politicians, scientists, learned and ordinary people always appeal to authorities in their speech, which is visible in the above references to St. Vladimir, St. Aleksandr Nevskiy, chronicles, and the serious role of the correct presentation of history. This explains why political leaders and their opinions are referred to so often in Russia, as Lenin and Marx were in the Soviet Union. The repressive laws, KGB, and political system were not the main cause of this, but the tradition of argumentation, which we can find in historical texts ever since the Middle Ages.

The punk rock band Pussy Riot made a political demonstration in the Cathedral of the Savior in 2012. They were sentenced to prison for violating the religious feelings of the people. The main reason, however, was that they attacked the very core legitimization of the whole political system, by declaring a critical message, i.e., dangerous knowledge, about the ruler and his deeds.³⁸

In the West today, the opposition has an important role in political life and the entire mental world. Counterargument is an elementary part of the discussion. In the East, the opposition forms the evil enemy power; counterargument represents dangerous and wrong knowledge, which is an insult against the authority of the teacher. The opposition must be destroyed, because it tries to establish *raskol'* instead of *sobornost'* and thus threatens the good and peace that the ruler has secured. The core of this attitude is not the greed of the ruler but the culture of argumentation, which is not based on the tradition of Scholasticism, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment, as Patriarch Kirill has stressed.

The truth is presented for the people in ceremonies and representations of tradition. In everyday life the judge and ruler represent the truth and law, so subjects approach the power not with demands and juridical arguments but with appeals. The judge is not impartial, but the one who knows the truth, which may or may not be granted. Not granting the truth is also seen as the will of God, not a

³⁷ <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6007> (accessed 17 February 2021); Patriarshaya ili Nikonovskaya letopis', 7060 (1552); Korpela, *Prince, Saint and Apostle*, 191, passim.

³⁸ Korpela, “Russia’s Religious Empire,” 77–92.

reason to protest or appeal to the next instance. In the mid-thirteenth century, papal envoy John of Plano Carpini was most astonished because there were no legal processes at the Mongol court and the Khan had no lawyers.³⁹

Western rational thinking presupposes a link between the proposition and rational arguments, a re-co-gnition of the truth. In the East, God realizes the order in the universe. Knowledge about this is hidden from ordinary people. The duty of the ruler is to deliver this truth and justice every day. Harmony – not rational, empiric arguments – is proof of the truth. Therefore, recognition is not a suitable concept because it presupposes an active role of the people analyzing, who do the “re” and “co.” The “gnition” (*gnosis*) is enough; instead of reason, the central concept is illumination (*preobrazhenie*, *al-ishraq*, *gnosis*), which is passive and opens the eternal truth of God, but above all obliges recipients not to suspect, ponder, analyze, or criticize the ruler, their truth, and order. The people are to respect, honor, and venerate the ruler’s authority, because everything else would violate the peace that the ruler allows. In this world the argument for and proof of the truth is always the authority that states this truth, and the belief in harmony. In this context reasonable arguments play no role. The classical Greek idea of the truth as *aletheia* (= something which is uncovered) is irrelevant; indeed, it is dangerous to uncover the truth. This is the basis for protecting traditional history explanations in the Russian Constitution today.

5 Conclusion: The East Did Not Need Recognition but Belief

Yuval Harari has stated that the “willingness to admit ignorance” is the most important qualification of the Western mind. While other cultures know everything already, “ignorance” has obliged Western people to develop sciences and to conquer the world.⁴⁰

When we see President Putin depicted on banners riding half-naked on the back of a bear, we think it as a joke, because we cannot imagine our own political leaders in the same position. However, it is not: these images simply symbol-

³⁹ John of Plano Carpini, 9:42; Jukka Korpela, “Zwischen Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft: Verbindungen zwischen dem russischen, zakon’ und dem tatarisch-persischen Rechtsdenken,” in *Das Gesetz–The Law–La Loi*, 53–56.

⁴⁰ Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (London: Harvill Secker, 2014), 247–274, *passim*.

ize the authority of the ruler and legitimize his deeds. Putin's image has been very positive among ordinary Russians (although not perhaps semi-Scandinavian St. Petersburg intellectuals). Similarly, we can think about references to Vladimir Putin as a reincarnation of St. Vladimir because this also has a long rhetorical tradition.

The Eastern path was not the Western one of rationalism, Enlightenment, and globalization, yet it was also a true intellectual choice, not a degeneration of human intellect and culture. It led to another comprehension of truth and the universe, which is still visible in our world.

If Eastern messages are approached only from the Western perspective and the past and present explained in the Western rational context, it is not possible to understand what is or was going on. This has been a bitter lesson for many sociologists and political scientists analyzing Eastern Europe and the Middle East in the last few decades.

I would recommend reading the argumentation of Eastern religious and political leaders from their own perspective, as speaking about the (eternal) truth of God in accordance with their own intellectual pattern. The core point of all these narratives and demonstrations is to show that the tradition and ancestors authorize the present rule and situation. This is a real argument today that is not confined to historical tradition, culture, or something that can be seen in Western political speech and ceremonies.

The sacralization of authority is equally important, because religion legitimizes the rule and God's grace guides the ruler. The Russian ruler today is still the ideological head of the empire, who represents the universal power and justice of God and is therefore the good shepherd and above the laws. So it was also in Soviet times.

Historical truth has no role whatsoever in this argumentation. Western historians clearly reject all interpretations of Russia as a direct follower of the Kievan realm, but so do Russian academic scholars. The narrative is not argued by scientific method or by reference to historical sources, but in rhetoric through exhibitions, statues, church mosaics, and museums, which the leaders of the society, first of all the president and patriarch, visit in demonstrative spectacles. New place names support this holistic feeling of the eternal mission of the great ruler.

The religiosity of Russians and their leaders, and the secularization of Russia are also not the issue here. The main point is that this narrative is the argument for Russian power, and its justification is based on the authority of those who tell this story. This makes it useless to analyze the speeches of different political actors or high prelates, to construct ideological factions, or to count the number of regular churchgoers. Right religion and true history form the core of Russian identity and the foundation for legitimate rule.

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Part II: **Toleration**

Serafim Seppälä

Chapter 5

Back to Pre-Constantinian Ethos? Transformation of Christian Identity under the Islamic Rule in Abbasid Times

Introduction

A fairly popular – if not academic – approach to the history of Christianity is that initially the Church was uncompromising and idealistic, manifesting approximately what it was supposed to be, but the Constantinian turn eventually spoiled the true Christian ethos, beliefs, and practices. Be that as it may, the approach evidently disregards a considerable part of Church history. In popular imagination, and to a surprising degree even among theologians, there is a tendency to ignore the reality that the traditional strongholds of the Church have lived most of their history under Islamic rule, and this forced the Christians to adjust themselves to the position of a ruled group. However, this does not mean *minority*, for Christians remained the majority in the Middle East for a considerable period. Even leading scholars may accidentally refer to Christian “minorities” in the early Abbasid era,¹ almost as if the Islamic character of the Middle East was an ontological fact, while it is indisputable that from Egypt to northern Iraq the majority remained Christian for centuries.²

The question I discuss in this chapter is the change that took place in the Christian identity, its ethos, and ideals, under the early Islamic rule. The fundamental claim is that the return to the status of the ruled enabled and triggered

1 Already the title is suspicious in Barbara Roggema, “Polemics between Religious Minorities: Christian Adversus Judaeos from the Early Abbasid Period,” in *Minorities in Contact in the Medieval Mediterranean*, ed. Clara Alamagro Vidal, Jessica Tearney-Pearce, and Luke Yarbrough (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 119.

2 The details vary from area to area. The number of Muslims surpassed that of Christians circa the ninth century in Iraq, around the thirteenth century in Syria, though some parts were predominantly Christian until the seventeenth century, while in Lebanon the Christian majority persisted until the 1970s. In general, rural areas remained Christian much longer than towns. Islamic history writing on the matter is late and focuses on towns. For details, see Serafim Seppälä, “Threat of Conversion in the Earliest Syriac Writings on Islam?,” in *Religious Polemics and Encounters in Late Antiquity: Boundaries, Conversions, and Persuasion*, ed. Timo Nisula, Anni Maria Laato, and Pablo Irizar (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 258–284.

Christians to reactivate the pre-Constantinian approach to Christian life, ethics, and ideals. As the claim is a hopelessly broad one, I have focused my discussion to a few key texts in defining the Christian ethos and ethic ideals of the second-century martyr church and in early Abbasid times (from 750 to circa 825). The main source is Theodore Abu Qurrah, the first patristic author and Orthodox saint to write in Arabic;³ his corpus is the most important source to the development of Arab Orthodox identity during the early Abbasid period.⁴ However, his writings on Islam have been studied almost solely from the perspective of early Christian–Muslim dialogue,⁵ which is not surprising, as they are apologetic and polemical documents in the first place. Yet they are remarkable also from the intra-Christian perspective, for they present a fresh redefinition of Christian identity, which resembles the ethos of the early Church in many ways. This being the case, I somewhat exceptionally read Abu Qurrah in the light of two early Athenian apologists, Aristides (writing ca. 125)⁶ and Athenagoras (ca. 177).⁷ Both have been somewhat disregarded in scholarship, given the philological difficulties of Aristides whose apology is fully preserved in Syriac only, and the stylistic diffi-

3 Arabic texts in Quṣṭanṭīn al-Bāṣā, ed., *Mayāmīr Tāwudūrus Abī Qurra ‘usqf Ḥarrān* (Beirut: Maṭba‘at al-fawā'id, 1904); Ignace Dick, ed., *Traite de l'existence du Createur et de la vraie religion*, Patrimoine arabe chrétien 3 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1982). Translated in John C. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005). I have translated into Finnish all of Theodore Abu Qurrah's Arabic works that deal with Islam (*Ikonien kunnioittamisesta: käänös ja johdanto* (Helsinki: Maahenki, 2008); *Kirjoituksia kristinuskosta ja islamista* (Helsinki: Suomen patristinen seura, 2020)), but in this paper I focus on his two longest treatises dealing with Islam, *Theologus autodidactus* (Dick, ed., *Traite de l'existence*; trans. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*) and *On the Veneration of Icons* (Dick, ed., *Théodore Abuqurra: Traité de culte des icones. Introduction et texte critique par I. Dick. [Maymar fi 'ikrām al-'aiqūnāt.]* Patrimoine arabe chrétien 10. Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale; Jounieh, Lebanon: Librairie Saint-Paul, 1986). Translated in S. H. Griffith, *A Treatise on the Veneration of the Holy Icons Written in Arabic by Theodore Abu Qurrah, Bishop of Harran* (Louvain: Peeters, 1997).

4 The main study related to this theme is Najib George Awad, *Orthodoxy in Arabic Terms: A Study of Theodore Abu Qurrah's Theology in Its Islamic Context* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015).

5 The most comprehensive up-to-date presentation is Awad, *Orthodoxy in Arabic Terms*, 88–102, 163–380.

6 The Syriac text, a medieval Greek rendering, and Armenian fragments in Aristide, *Apologie*, Sources Chrétiennes 470 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2003). Translated in J. R. Harris, *Apology of Aristides on Behalf of the Christians: From a Syriac Ms. Preserved on Mt. Sinai* (Cambridge: University Press, 1891).

7 The Greek text in B. Pouderon, ed., *Supplique au sujet des chretiens et sur la resurrection*, Sources Chrétiennes 379 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1992). Translation by Joseph Hugh Crehan in *Athenagoras: Embassy for the Christians. The Resurrection of the Dead* (New York: Newman Press, 1955). Translation by William R. Schoedel in *Athenagoras: Legatio and De Resurrectione* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

culties in Athenagoras who makes heavy reading with his nonstop quotations from Hellenistic sources. In pairing these texts with Arabic sources from 600 years later I am not suggesting any influences, given the rarity of the two Athenian authors, but on the contrary, it is precisely the lack of direct influences which makes the thematic parallels relevant.⁸

In this context, the vague concept of “identity” is approached mainly through the *ethical ideals* with the presumption that textual descriptions of idealized forms of perfect behaviour to some extent reflect the character of contemporaneous Christian identity and, perhaps even more importantly, set lines for its development. However, it is good to recall that the concept of identity is a modern notion which is not found in Greek, Arabic, or other languages of late antiquity, and the current custom to use it as a tool to approach texts of all kinds may easily lead to anachronisms.

1 Point of Comparison: Christian Ethics in Second-Century Athens

As the dating of Aristides of Athens’s apology has been rather convincingly settled to 124–125,⁹ it offers a rare description of Christian ethics and ideals in the time when the New Testament was not yet put together, and all its books were perhaps not even written. The text is intended to address the emperor in an official context.

Dogmatic speculations being spectacularly absent, Aristides in his apology offers an interesting description of the Christians’ way of life through a combination of practicality and idealism. The genre, as well as the historical context (persecutions), demanded he employ rhetoric that represents Christians in the most favourable light one may imagine. Therefore, his text is not to be read as an exact description of practical realities but a literary construction of Christians’ highest ideals and values. On the other hand, there is no actual reason to claim that these two were in essential contradiction. Given the threats the Christians were facing and the accusations they were subject to, it was in fact crucial for

⁸ Athenagoras remained almost unknown until modern times, as he was practically never quoted in patristic literature. Aristides did not even survive in original Greek. The texts of second-century apologists were never produced in large quantities, as after the Constantinian turn they appeared outdated and were seldom copied; even Justin the Martyr survived in extremely few copies. For discussion, see Jakob Enberg, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, and Jörg Ulrich, eds., *In Defence of Christianity* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014).

⁹ The less likely option is 138–161. See the introduction in Aristide, *Apologie*, 37.

Aristides to concentrate on describing not only normative rulings or theoretical aims but precisely the pragmatic reality.

Ultimately, Aristides's ethics is the Sermon on the Mount read into practice. The idealism of the sermon is presented as the norm of Christian behaviour, and at the same time, Christians' behaviour is described in the same spirit. Christians do good to their enemies and "what they do not want be done to themselves, they do not do to others." Likewise, "those who have done wrong to them, they console and make them as their friends."¹⁰ And even more, the Christians aim to commit their good deeds in secret, as the Gospel suggests: "Christians do not announce their merciful deeds into the ears of people, but they take care that they are recognized by none. They hide their giving like the one who finds a treasure and hides it."¹¹

In a similar manner, Athenagoras of Athens half a century later underlined that it is not sufficient for Christians to be virtuous in the ordinary sense, according to prevalent ethical paradigms, but they are to surpass the prevalent norms of goodness: "It is not enough for us to be just (and justice is to give as good as we get); no, we must be good and long-suffering."¹² Athenagoras contrasted human laws, "whose surveillance an evil man may well escape," and Christian divine laws that prompts Christians to consider their neighbours "the measure for justice."¹³

Nevertheless, such ideals were something that the teachers of the Church had to leave aside during the heyday of Christian empire. When (approximately) all were Christians, it would have been rather meaningless to claim moral superiority over the non-existing other: if all are morally superior, then none is. However, this did not apply for the whole Church. The Christian empire of Rome was never the full story of Christianity, even if one concentrates on the Nicene orthodoxy. Already in the fourth century, the Orthodox Church was strongly present outside the Roman borders in Armenia, Georgia, Ethiopia, and Persia. The borders were constantly on the move, though.

¹⁰ Aristides, *Apol.* 15:4. My translation from Syriac.

¹¹ Aristides, *Apol.* 16:2. My translation from Syriac.

¹² Athenagoras, *Legatio* 34:3, trans. Joseph Hugh Crehan (*Embassy for the Christians*). Athenagoras paraphrases the Sermon on the Mount also in *Legatio* 11:2, 12:3.

¹³ Athenagoras, *Legatio* 32:4, trans. William R. Schoedel.

2 Return to Early Christian Ethics

After the Islamic conquests in the mid-seventh century, the Christians of the Middle East found themselves outside the protection of the Christian empire. However, it was only a century later that Christians began to realize that the Islamic power was not a temporary hardship, but it had come to stay. In the early Abbasid period, a new Arabic culture was emerging, largely due to Christians; a century after the Islamic invasion, there was still practically no Islamic Arabic literature. In these circumstances, Theodore Abu Qurrah commenced to create Arabic Christian literature, in which Christianity was redefined in Arabic terms. Besides endless linguistic solutions in formulating Byzantine theology into Arabic, he had to reformulate the basic message: what is it to be Christian?¹⁴

In this pursuit, Abu Qurrah placed great importance on historical argumentation. In his apologetic and polemical writings, he repeatedly compared and contrasted Islam with the early Church, and Muslim leaders with the apostles. In aiming to outline the truth as perceived in history, his premise was that the early phase of religion properly manifests and gives expression to its original ideals. The logic is that if God is really behind the religion, he does not admit his own community to be on a wrong track from the very beginning. Even without gods, it is evident that the original community represents what the first authorities or founders of a given religion managed to construct and assemble, and in that sense the initial community can be viewed as a realistic image of the original ideals of the religion.¹⁵

However, it was only the Melkite (“imperial”) Orthodox Church that had the collective experience of being a politically dominating group; it is from this fact that their nickname was derived. In northern Mesopotamia, the area of Abu Qurrah’s activity, most Christians were west Syrian or Armenian “Monophysites,” or east Syrian “Nestorians.” The Syriac-speaking Christians had never been in a politically dominant position, though they were majorities in large areas. In contrast, Abu Qurrah represented the Byzantine Orthodox Church under Islamic

¹⁴ A detailed discussion in Awad, *Orthodoxy in Arabic Terms*, chapters 4–5. See also Serafim Seppälä, “Knowledge of God in Theodore Abu Qurrah: Apophatic and Rationalistic Approaches through Arabic and Greek Terminologies,” in *Den Orient erforschen, mit Orthodoxen leben*, ed. Egbert Schlarb (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2021), 427–438.

¹⁵ In Abu Qurrah’s times, the setting was of course “epistemologically imbalanced” given that the origins of Christianity seven centuries earlier, whereas Islamic origins were quite recent. However, for the argumentation of this paper the relevant aspect is exactly *history as perceived*: Abu Qurrah sees the story of Christianity through the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount, martyrdom, and “minority identity,” even though quantitatively Christians were still the majority.

rule, and therefore it is in his thinking that the transformation of Christian identity shows most clearly.

In intra-Christian disputes, the Byzantine Orthodox were accustomed to think that outer success – the official, dominant position in the empire – was a result of their truthfulness and a sign of God's favour. This was not necessarily an authoritative formulation, or even an explicated one, but somewhere in the level of attitudes it was a natural and understandable disposition. For the same reason, it is obvious that as the political situation changed essentially, this attitude had to alter.

Abu Qurrah's writings exemplify and bear witness to this very process. The new position under the domination of the religious other gave rise to the idealization of weakness, hardships, and suffering. For a religion whose ethics were based on the Sermon on the Mount,¹⁶ revival of the ideals of the martyr Church was essentially a natural development. In the surviving sources, this happens largely for rhetorically flavoured homiletic purposes, but then again, homiletical activity tends to reflect certain realities, and at any rate it effectively contributes to identity formation. As the ethics based on the Sermon on the Mount were revitalized, the Christians were presented as people who "bear insults patiently, forgive those who strike them, offer their left cheek when slapped on the right, give their cloak when their clothes have been taken, go two miles when forced to go one, give when asked, do not refuse when asked for a loan, bless when cursed, love when they are hated."¹⁷

By its ethos and logic, the discourse corresponds closely to the descriptions of Christian attitudes of the second century. In addition to its ethical content, it implies that the dogmatic truth of Christianity can be shown and affirmed on practical realities: the truth itself is seen from how Christians live and act. The "argument from praxis" was not a very functional one in Byzantium or in the Latin West. It was rather nonsensical in a society in which all were Christians, but the emergence of Islamic power made it applicable once again, as the

16 The Eastern Church fathers repeatedly presented the Sermon on the Mount as the heart of Christian ethics, while practically never referring to the Ten Commandments as relevant for Christians. Moreover, fathers could base a lot of their argumentation on reason, i.e., platonically tuned natural theology. See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 136–151.

17 Arabic text in Dick, *Traite de l'existence*, 267. I have modified the translation of Lamoreaux (*Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 45) by simplifying the syntax. In the context, Abu Qurrah describes the gentiles as having been the opposite of these values, while the Muslims represented the opposite in Abu Qurrah's time. In this way, he drew a clear parallel between the pagans of old and Muslims.

non-Christian other became a relevant point of comparison. Nevertheless, one should not talk about “minority identity” here, for the change had already taken place when Christians were still a majority, albeit a subjugated one.¹⁸

It is telling that the literary genre of martyrs’ passions, that of new martyrs executed by Islamic rule, was revived first in the Byzantine Church under the Umayyad caliphate. The message is clear: the times of the early Church are back, also regarding martyrdom.¹⁹

3 Apostles Reviewed after the Islamic Invasion

Throughout the centuries, Christianity had identified itself as an “apostolic” religion, but as the circumstances changed and perspectives developed, the image of apostles underwent significant changes. In Byzantine minds, the apostles had turned from fishermen into cosmic heroes who rule in heaven in the place of ancient gods.²⁰ In many ways, Theodore Abu Qurrah returned to the historical origins, but with a perspective conditioned by the social and apologetic encounter with Islam.

For our subject, this is relevant due to the apostles’ function as emblematic figures who manifest the ideal forms of Christian ethos. Though unique by their position and in that sense inimitable even for saints, their virtues and values function as ideals for all Christians. For Abu Qurrah, the apostles were charismatic missionaries and committed ascetics, but not in the monastic sense of the word,²¹ as they manifest the original and universal ascetical ideals applying

18 To what extent the Christians were “subjugated,” is of course a debate of its own. In studies based on later Islamic sources, it is customary to portray a naïve image of Christians as a “protected” group flourishing and living in peace and prosperity under Islamic protection. However, in the Syriac, Greek, Coptic, and Armenian Christian sources the situation is approximately the reverse, especially during the first century of Islamic rule.

19 The earliest surviving case is the *Martyrdom of Peter of Capitolia* (d. 715), written in Greek. See Stephen Shoemaker, *Three Christian Martyrdoms from Early Islamic Palestine* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2016), xv–xxx.

20 The apostles’ position at the head of heavenly ranks is most evidently visible in their depiction in the paintings of Byzantine churches. Their special character shows illustratively also in the apocryphal texts that imaginatively portray their lives and miracles, as well as in the attribution of Christian liturgies to apostolic authority. On the image of apostles and apostolic times in early Christian literature, see Anthony Hilhorst, ed., *The Apostolic Age in Patristic Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

21 However, the same ascetic-apostolic ideals were an important factor also behind the emergence of monasticism. See G. J. M. Bartelink, “Monks: The Ascetic Movement as a Return to the

to all Christians. However, in Abu Qurrah's reading, the apostolic characteristics were combined in a somewhat distinctive way – and repeatedly contrasted with Islamic practices.

Aiming to show the truth of Christianity with the help of its early history, Abu Qurrah had the apostles in the heart of his argumentation. It is telling that he did not resort to the apostles in an exegetical way, by arguing on the basis of the Scriptures and scrutinizing their wordings, but rather utilized the apostles as representatives of the early history in wider terms, resorting to board historical lines. Though these two approaches inevitably are overlapping, he often avoided argumentation based on Scriptures, as it would not have convinced his possible Muslim readers. In this perspective, a claim is true not because it is *written* but because it has *happened*.

In trying to demonstrate and confirm the truth of Christianity from the way it spread in the earliest centuries, Abu Qurrah ended up with a caricature-like image of apostles who took Christianity to all ends of the globe, and despite all possible outer troubles and the paradoxicality of their message, all the nations of the world converted to their faith. In this context, Abu Qurrah contrasted the apostles with early Islamic leaders, who were warriors and conquerors, and took full use of the contrast, presenting the apostles as “among the most despised people in the world,” whom “all the gentiles” accepted nevertheless.²² Thus he stressed the significance of the apostles' mission but at the same time he emphasized that their success was not based on their personal characteristics, skills, or position, but on divine effects.

We may note that in stressing the role of the apostles as the base of Christianity, Abu Qurrah again happened to be in accord with Aristides of Athens who formulated the same belief already in the early second century: “These twelve disciples went forth to the known parts of the world, teaching His greatness with all humility and solemnity. For this reason, those who in our days believe in that preaching are called ‘Christians.’”²³

It is noteworthy that this was presented only a few decades after the apostolic era. It shows that the apostles were symbols of Christian faith and its universal character and the living link between Christ and the Church, as the fathers of later in the second century underlined.²⁴ Likewise, the ascetic virtues of early

Aetas Apostolica,” in Hilhorst, *Apostolic Age*, 204–218. Likewise, in the classics of Byzantine spirituality Paul and the apostles are quoted usually in the context of the fight against passions in the ascetic struggle.

²² Dick, *Traite de l'existence*, 264; trans. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 44.

²³ Aristide, *Apologie* 2:4. Translation mine.

²⁴ E.g. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 3.3.4, 5.33.4.

Christians were recognized even by outsiders. Galen (d. ca. 216), who was rather critical concerning Jewish and Christian faiths, acknowledged that among Christians there were “most admirable people who frequently act according to perfect virtue, and this is to be seen not only in their men but in their women as well.”²⁵

For Abu Qurrah, the ascetic ethos of Christianity was based and built on the apostolic way of life. In describing apostles’ abstinence, simplicity, and austerity, he determinately contrasted this with the Islamic attitudes as perceived by him: “they summoned to the Christian religion, permitting no one to indulge their appetites to the world, its many women, its delights, or its glories, such that people might follow them. Rather, quite to the contrary, they taught that the things of the world must be wholly abandoned.”²⁶

In other words, apostles had no material benefits to offer, but quite the opposite, they were determined to turn people away from all material aims. Nevertheless, with such a hopeless programme they “filled the four corners of the world with this religion.”²⁷ Rhetorical exaggerations notwithstanding, it is certainly relevant to consider the fact that Christianity did spread for three centuries without offering outward advantages,²⁸ while there were considerable actual or potential disadvantages, even the risk of death. For Abu Qurrah, *this* shows the divine truth of Christianity.

As Christianity had spread despite persecutions and without granting advantages in taxation, career promotions, or other benefits like those that the converts to Islam were provided, Abu Qurrah made full use of the difference. Contrasting the apostles with the Islamic origins filled with conquests and looting, he painted an image of the apostles as the twelve poorest and most despicable persons one may imagine.

They had in this world neither rank nor nobility with which to entice others and make followers of them. They had in this world neither wealth nor dwelling nor place of refuge, nei-

25 The remark has survived among Ibn Zura’s (d. 1008) Arabic quotations from Galen’s otherwise lost work *Summary of Platonic Dialogues* (Πλατωνικῶν διαλογῶν συνόψεις). The section is translated in Richard Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), 91. In the Eastern Churches, the ascetic ideals have remained at the heart of Christianity up to current times; one might say that only the emergence of “non-ascetic” forms of Christianity in the West turned the ascetic character of Christianity from self-evident reality into a topic in need of analysis and questioning.

26 Dick, *Traite de l’existence*, 263; trans. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 43.

27 Dick, *Traite de l’existence*, 264; trans. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 44.

28 An exception might be the case of *slaves* for whom acceptance to the community, sacraments, and even hierarchy, meant a promotion of sorts, though not without risk in the time of persecutions.

ther two pieces of clothing nor food for two days, not even a bag, nothing that such that people would follow them in hope of receiving something. They had in this world neither power nor authority nor influence, neither an ability to compel nor the power to exalt, nothing such that anyone would follow them, whether through compulsion or fear or out of a desire to be exalted through them.²⁹

This is of course a rhetorical caricature, but a relevant one. Owing to the conscious counterreaction to Islamic values as he saw them, Abu Qurrah did not even try to view the apostles as intelligent or successful protagonists, nor did he aim to downplay their relatively low origins but went to the other extreme. For him, the call of Islam was all about endeavouring for worldly pleasures and honour, with a sword in hand, as the apostolic teaching demanded one to forsake such aims, and all other worldly ambitions.

All this is one-sided and exaggerated, as the Middle Eastern rhetorical style is, but there were also a lot of facts to exaggerate. The above quoted description of the apostles reflects certain principles and details of the gospels and in that sense represents legitimate ideals for Christian identity construction. Islamic conquests, lootings, and martial operations were a living memory, too.

When the literary Islamic counter-polemics emerged a few generations later, it is telling that a Muslim author did not have to deny that Islamic power had spread with the help of outer power, violence, and oppression; what he denied was the idea that this is ethically questionable or religiously suspicious.³⁰ In other words, Muslims did not have to challenge the fact that Christianity was a more ascetic religion, but they simply disagreed with the claim that a true religion should promote such ideals in the first place. In their eyes, power and pleasure were not in contradiction with spiritual ideals but rather proof of divine favour. This is evident in the earliest surviving explicit critique of Abu Qurrah's claims, preserved under the name of Abd al-Jabbār.³¹ Of course, this is not to say that there were no Muslim ascetics – albeit mostly after Abu Qurrah's times – or that there were no Christians looking for pleasure, but none denied that there were manifest differences in the emphases of ideals between the two religions. Abu Qurrah chose to underline these in his writings, which were mostly read by other Christians. Consequently, his approach was more relevant for Christian identity formation than for any interfaith encounter.

²⁹ Dick, *Traite de l'existence*, 262; trans. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 43.

³⁰ 'Abd Al-Jabbār, *Tathbit dalā'il al-nubuwwa* 2:265–268. See Serafim Seppälä, "The Early History of Religion (Dis)proving Its Truth: The Historical Argument in Theodore Abu Qurrah and Abd al-Jabbār," *Approaching Religion* 8:2 (2018): 35–36.

³¹ For detailed discussion, see Seppälä, "Early History of Religion."

4 Proudly Paradoxical

In Byzantine minds, the apostles had turned into heavenly rulers, vaguely resembling the deities and *hēroi* of old. After the practical and ideological upheaval brought by the challenge of Islam, Theodore Abu Qurrah went to the other extreme. In describing the early spread of Christianity, he presented the apostles as earthly characters totally devoid of charm or appealing qualities: “Among them was none who understood how to write or was possessed of worldly wisdom.”³² Obviously, the aim of such exaggerative rhetoric is to make one’s main point grasped and experienced *effectively* so that the message would be comprehended profoundly and dynamically. Such claims are not to be read like a mathematical table (“if there was one apostle who knew how to read, Abu Qurrah was lying”).

Interestingly, Abu Qurrah made similar moves also in the field of doctrinal ideas. *Paradoxes* had been at the heart of Christian faith since the emergence of doctrinal thought, but after the challenge of Islam the meaning and nature of this fact was underlined in a new way. As Muslims blamed the Christian faith as illogical and contradictory, Abu Qurrah not only admitted this, but went on to stress the paradoxical character of the Christian message to the extreme, presenting it as the guarantee of divine truth. He even challenged his Muslim readers to choose one of their wisest men and send him “to India” to proclaim Christian teaching; the fact that he could not make a single convert (except perhaps among the simplest ones) proves that the Christian message could not have conquered the world without special divine influence and miracles.³³ This peculiar argumentation aimed to turn the Islamic accusation into a matter of pride for Christians: Muslims were not wrong in claiming Christianity to be paradoxical, they were just unable to grasp the sublimity of paradoxical thinking in the case of divine truths.

In a wider perspective, such an attitude is interesting for it reveals a slight shift in relation to the Byzantine tradition. The Cappadocian fathers had used natural theology and Middle Platonic views extensively in defending the rational character of Christianity, but now the rival was a monotheistic faith, and the natural theology was a two-edged sword. Nevertheless, Abu Qurrah did employ it in defending the rational character of Christian faith, so there is no need to over-interpret his position, but still the emphasis is remarkable: a Christian does not have to explain away the paradoxical kernel of the Christian faith – he/

32 Dick, *Traite de l'existence*, 262–263; trans. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 43.

33 Dick, *Traite de l'existence*, 268–269; trans. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 46.

she can simply be proud of it – and to use rationality and natural theology to defend it, as Abu Qurrah himself endeavoured, with varying success.³⁴

Moreover, Abu Qurrah tried to set this situation in a historical perspective. Christianity had brought to the world a theological vision and conception of God which differed from all earlier ones by its paradoxicality and dynamic character. For Abu Qurrah, Islam offered a perception of God which was “simple and agreeable to the minds of the common folk, perhaps an account that someone had already proposed, one with the common folk was already familiar,” though he never mentions Islam explicitly in such connections.³⁵ Such remarks leave the impression that the Islamic critique was straightforward and black-and-white, and therefore Abu Qurrah encouraged his audience to think with nuances and tones. He argues that if a conception of God is accepted because of its simplicity and external advantages, its success cannot be a proof of its truthfulness. For the Christian identity this means that Christians have a faith which is above simple standpoints and subtler than the everyday views of “common people.” In other words, Christians were encouraged to surpass easy rationalism and to think in a more nuanced way, leaving some space for paradoxes, an apophatic approach, and mystical reality.

In historical perspective, Abu Qurrah’s vision is that Christianity had gradually refined humankind into an ascetic and modest way of life, including monogamy, and to a profoundly supranatural, paradoxical understanding of God. In this perspective, Islam took people back to a primitive monotheism and sensual pleasures, and even worse, it did this by making use of the groundwork of Christianity in uprooting polytheism. One might say that Islam was spoiling the religious evolution of humankind. In illustrating this, Abu Qurrah painted a caricature that before Christianity, people lived in castles coated with gold and silver, but Christianity “obliged them to wander the deserts and dwell in caves and caverns like wild animals.”³⁶ For Christians, such views provided a possibility of viewing, say, a lack of goods or positions as a subtle and exclusive actuality.

In describing pre-Christian gentiles, Abu Qurrah seems to have Muslims and Islamic conquests in mind:

The Gentiles used to wear royal clothing, spun with gold, of kinds unnumberable, and to sleep on a wide variety of equally priceless beds. Christianity made this odious to them,

³⁴ Among the noteworthy oddities in his argumentation is his undertaking to prove the trinity of God through reason in *Theologus autodidactus* ii, see Dick, *Traite de l'existence*, 219–239; trans. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 9–18.

³⁵ Dick, *Traite de l'existence*, 260; trans. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 42.

³⁶ Dick, *Traite de l'existence*, 266; trans. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 45.

and they came to be content with woollen clothes and with sleeping on mats and the ground. The gentiles used to plunder madly the wealth of others and to conquer them in the same way. Christianity made them cease and caused them to distribute their own wealth and possessions to the poor and needy.³⁷

The message is clear: our religion is ascetic, above materialism and avarice. This may even be considered as Abu Qurrah's main argument against the threat of Islam in the era of the first mass conversions.

In Christian eyes, Islamic emphases and ideals happened to largely match with those of biblical Judaism. For instance, earthly kingdoms as spiritual objectives belonged to the early phases of the spiritual evolution of human beings; likewise, an abrasive emphasis on the oneness of God had belonged to the phase of growing out of idolatry, and Christianity had surpassed such aims from the very beginning.³⁸ Thus the problem of Islam seemed to be that it represented a return to ancient ideals that Christianity had already outgrown and surpassed. For the Christian identity, this means that in contesting the Islamic claim of being a novel religion, Christians set themselves above the Islamic logic and aims, values, and ideas.

5 Aesthetics and Identity

From late antiquity to current times, there is no Orthodox church without icons or frescoes, candles, chanting of hymnography, and liturgical incensing. Perhaps such aspects have been taken for granted, for there seems to have been very little discussion on the ultimate meaning of aesthetics for Christian identity in the late antiquity. However, the fact that Islamic worship lacked all these enabled Theodore Abu Qurrah to develop some views related to the aesthetic aspects of Christian identity.

Abu Qurrah estimated that Christianity had fostered aesthetic awareness and refined the sense of beauty among nations and peoples, through a slow and painstaking historical process, and now Islam was rapidly ruining it all. He saw among the problems of Islam a certain coarseness which manifested itself especially in relation to beauty and sacredness. In his work on the veneration of icons, he repeatedly accused those who refuse to venerate images of

³⁷ Dick, *Traite de l'existence*, 266; trans. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 45.

³⁸ See the discussion in Serafim Seppälä, "Torah in the Christian–Islamic Polemics of Theodore Abū Qurrah and 'Abd al-Jabbār," in *The Challenge of the Mosaic Torah in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. Antti Laato (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 231, 237–238.

coarse-mindedness and dullness,³⁹ as the Christians have been “gifted with intelligence (*fiḥm*) and subtlety of mind (*laṭāfat ‘aql*) in the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁰ Even the very way of looking of icons is different: Christians ultimately look through the painted picture at the characters themselves, seeing something essentially more than non-Christians do.⁴¹ In practical terms, this means that a Christian who lighted a candle and kissed an icon in a church did not have to consider his/her behaviour somehow inferior or irrational despite Muslims’ claims. On the contrary, in doing so, Christians could be enchanted by the awareness of having surpassed the more primitive levels of religion.

Unfortunately, however, Abu Qurrah presented these views in a rude, polemical tone, and the result is somewhat coarse – in fact resembling Muslims’ coarseness as portrayed in his rhetoric! Nevertheless, his intuitions here are relevant, even profound, and would have deserved to be expressed in more refined terms, which also exemplifies how difficult it is for thinkers to not contradict their own principles and ideals.

Abu Qurrah’s vision is that the puritan monotheism of Islam was spoiling the aesthetic sensibility that Christians had little by little achieved through the veneration of icons and other sacred items. In estimating this critique, it is of course good to recall that the Islam which Abu Qurrah was criticizing was only a century and a half old, and its best aesthetic achievements were to appear in later eras. However, behind his claims is the reality that Christian spirituality, identity, and theology all focused on the liturgical life, which was in the process of becoming aesthetically and dogmatically richer, due to the emerging new feasts and hymnography, whereas the Islamic praxis was merely a stripped-down version of basic common prayers. In terms of the practised religion, one might suppose this to have been even the main difference between the religions, although for some curious reason Abu Qurrah does not explicitly dwell on this difference.

Visual and other aesthetic approaches to spirituality were a distinctive feature of Christianity, but in the studies on Eastern Christian identity and thought

39 Théodore Abuqurra, *Traité de culte*, 8:10, 8:39, 12:21, 15:9, 15:24. Translated in Griffith, *A Treatise on the Veneration*, 44, 48, 64, 70–71. In such contexts, Abu Qurrah never dares to mention Muslims or Islam explicitly, even though the allusion is obvious, but to avoid accusations of blasphemy of Islam, he refers to “Jews” instead. For a detailed discussion on his rhetorical strategy in this respect, see Serafim Seppälä, “Theodore Abu Qurrah’s Narrative Strategies for Dealing with Muslim Antagonists in *Maymar fī ‘ikrām al-‘ayqūnāt*,” *Parole de l’Orient* 37 (2012): 271–289.

40 Théodore Abuqurra, *Traité de culte* 18:7; Griffith, *Treatise on the Veneration*, 78.

41 Théodore Abuqurra, *Traité de culte* 12:16; Griffith, *Treatise on the Veneration*, 63.

the aesthetic dimension is seldom discussed (except for specific studies on iconography or art history). The silence is due to modern Western paradigms of Christianity, and it discloses the paradigmatic difficulties in grasping the character of Eastern Christianity, and nay, the Eastern character of Christianity. One may say that Christianity itself was thoroughly a Middle Eastern religion – an “oriental” one, to use a more exotic word, given that the distinctive and emblematic Byzantine features of the Orthodox Church represent thoroughly Eastern aesthetics. This is still obvious when observing the present-day Orthodox Church in Greece, the style of which – musical scales, melodic tunes, hymnography, visual style, ritualistic gestures, appearance of textiles – does not represent the aesthetics of the present Greece in the southern Balkans, but rather that of the ancient, Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Cappadocia, and Constantinople.

6 Conclusion

Due to his apologetic interests and rhetorical sensibilities, Theodore Abu Qurrah is not the best source on Islam, but he is the key source on the transformation of Orthodox Christian identity in the Middle East at the end of the eighth century, the period of the first considerable mass conversions to Islam. As Christians had become a part of the Islamic empire and its emerging Arabic culture, Abu Qurrah modified the constituents of Christian identity to give a fresh definition for being a Christian. Aiming to base his vision on the history of the early Church and the ideals of the Gospels, he took full use of the Christians’ contemporary reality as a dominated group. The result can be viewed as a revival of the early Christian ethics in which the state of being a dominated group was a paradigm for ethical and other identity concerns. A lot of this discussion deliberated on the role of the apostles, their mission and their asceticism, which constitute a central theme and motif in Abu Qurrah’s writings. The result in many respects resembles the ethics of the initial martyr Church who took pride in implementing the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount. Abu Qurrah complemented this with the ideals of aesthetic sensibility and the manifestly paradoxical character of Christian awareness. As this demanded virtues that rise above those of the common people, the result may be considered somewhat enigmatic: Christians could be proud of being humble, delight in being ascetic, rational in being paradoxical.

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Chapter 6

A Two-Way Process: Encounters between Lutheran Authorities and Anabaptists in Sixteenth-Century Württemberg

Introduction

The dynamic processes of shaping otherness and identity in medieval and early modern societies have been studied intensively over the recent years. The vilification of religious others, often labelled as heretics, has been recognized as an essential part of identity-building in Christianity since its very beginnings.¹ The outright necessity of heretics for Christianity had already been pointed out by the Apostle Paul, who argued that true Christians would be distinguished against a background of heretics all the more clearly.² In historical research on early modern otherness, much attention has been paid, and rightly so, to post-colonial analyses of how otherness is connected to power hierarchies. Also the efforts of the emerging states to marginalize and control unwanted people or behaviour have come under scrutiny. Early modern confessional churches, slowly emerging after the Reformation(s) and closely tied to state power, have been seen as participating in this quest for clearer boundaries and official identities, although the actual success of imposing norms and clear-cut confessional identities from above has been widely challenged.³

The religious controversies of the Reformation era certainly provided increased occasions for drawing boundaries. One of the most contested groups

1 The writing of this article has been financially supported by the Academy of Finland (project nr. 346909). For a recent biblical studies approach, see Raimo Hakola, Nina Nikki, and Ulla Tervahauta, eds., *Others and the Construction of Early Christian Identities* (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2013). For similar features in the treatment of medieval heresies see e.g., Euan Cameron, *Waldenses: Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

2 See e.g., 1 Cor 11:19 (more clearly stated in older translations than in the New International Version).

3 There is a huge body of research on the so-called *Konfessionalisierung* in Germany that cannot be cited in full here. See with further references e.g., Andreas Holzem, *Christentum in Deutschland 1550–1850: Konfessionalisierung – Aufklärung – Pluralisierung* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2015); Heinrich Richard Schmidt, *Konfessionalisierung im 16. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1992).

in sixteenth-century Germany were the Anabaptists, who were dismissed as heretics by Lutherans and Catholics alike. However, in Anabaptist scholarship, while the negative attitudes towards Anabaptists are well-known and often attested, the actual processes of labelling and identity-building by way of vilification and negation have not overly received attention.⁴ Researchers have rather focused on the intellectual and social origins of the different Anabaptist groups and their interrelations than the marginalization or ‘othering’ processes by their antagonists, possibly because the stereotypes employed have been regarded as too unvarying to be interesting. However, as Sigrun Haude’s analysis of the sixteenth-century authorities’ dealings with the Anabaptist kingdom of Münster in 1534/35, “one of the most notorious events of the sixteenth century,” shows, not only were the reactions more varied than often thought, but they also reveal a lot about the values and ideals of the contemporaries. Contemporary interpretations of Anabaptism should therefore not be analysed only in the narrow framework of Anabaptism or even that of the Reformation, but as a larger question of how conceptions of otherness relate to and actively shape religious identities.⁵

In this chapter, I explore the shaping of official Lutheran identities in the southwest German Duchy of Württemberg by way of distancing from the Anabaptists. I will focus on the processes of demarcation and identity formation in the anti-Anabaptist administrative material produced by the Lutheran magistrates and the encounters involved. Such sources have in Anabaptist studies been exploited mostly to uncover Anabaptist attitudes and practices, so that my analysis of the Lutherans’ perspective and the dynamics of the encounters

⁴ For recent studies at least touching the topic, see Andrea Chudaska, *Peter Riedemann: Konfessionsbildendes Täufern im 16. Jahrhundert* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2003); Mark Furner, “Lay Casuistry and the Survival of Later Anabaptists in Bern,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 75:4 (2001): 429–469; Hanspeter Jecker, *Ketzer – Rebellen – Heilige: Das Basler Täufern von 1580–1700* (Basel: Verlag des Kantons Basel-Landschaft, 1998); Päivi Räisänen, *Ketzer im Dorf: Visitationsverfahren, Täuferbekämpfung und lokale Handlungsmuster im frühneuzeitlichen Württemberg* (Constance: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2011); Astrid von Schlachta, *Hutterische Konfession und Tradition (1578–1619): Etabliertes Leben zwischen Ordnung und Ambivalenz* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern Verlag, 2003). From a Lutheran standpoint, see Thomas Kaufmann, “Nahe Fremde – Aspekte der Wahrnehmung der ‘Schwärmer’ im frühneuzeitlichen Luthertum,” in *Transkonfessionalität – Interkonfessionalität – binnenkonfessionelle Pluralität: Neue Forschungen zur Konfessionalisierungsthese*, ed. Kaspar von Greyerz et al. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2003), 179–241.

⁵ Sigrun Haude, *In the Shadow of ‘Savage Wolves’: Anabaptist Münster and the German Reformation during the 1530s* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 1–2. See also Robert W. Scribner, “Wie wird man Außenseiter? Ein- und Ausgrenzung im frühneuzeitlichen Deutschland,” in *Aussenseiter zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, ed. Marion Kobelt-Groch and Norbert Fischer (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 21–46.

between the parties is novel. I am working with a definition of otherness as a complex social and cultural process of negotiation and demarcation “by which a dominant in-group (‘Us,’ the Self) constructs one or many dominated out-groups (‘Them,’ Other) by stigmatizing a difference – real or imagined – presented as a negation of identity and thus a motive for potential discrimination.”⁶ Further, I endorse Michael Driedger’s broad, culturalist understanding of collective identities, which is less about “what or who groups of people ‘really’ were, but rather the standards that opinion leaders used to define who they or others were.” According to Driedger, religious identities emerged in a time marked by confessional polemics precisely through the conflicts and demarcations with other groups. In less strained situations, the boundaries could blur more easily.⁷

In the increasingly professionalizing early modern administration, processes of social exclusion were more and more integrated into administrative procedures and institutions and thus often intensified and specified.⁸ Conflicts between Lutheran authorities and Anabaptists and their sympathizers largely revolved around defining the boundaries between forbidden and allowed religiosity. In addition to Anabaptists, Württemberg authorities also used other terms to describe religious deviance or indifference such as ‘Epicureans,’ ‘enthusiasts,’ ‘blasphemers,’ or ‘superstitious’ people or practices, in addition to moral offenders like ‘drunkards.’ However, in my primary sources, the material relating to the church visitation protocols in Württemberg especially in the district of Schorndorf, these did not carry the same weight as the Anabaptist labels and are therefore not treated here.

I argue that although Lutherans and Anabaptists both stemmed from the evangelical reform movements of the early 1520s, the ‘othering’ of Anabaptists was vital for the shaping of official Lutheran ideals, because Lutherans had to refine their theology and social norms in the face of the challenges posed by Anabaptist teachings and their ways of life, who, like the Lutherans, drew on severe criticism of the Catholic Church. After outlining the general framework of dealing with otherness in post-Reformation Württemberg, I will turn to the encounters of the Lutheran authorities with the Anabaptist leaders and missionaries, where the drawing of boundaries and vilification of the adversaries can be observed most clearly. It is worth pointing out that the identity-shaping by

6 Jean-François Staszak, “Other/Otherness,” in *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, vol. 8, ed. Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (Oxford: Elsevier 2009), 42.

7 Michael Driedger, *Obedient Heretics: Mennonite Identities in Lutheran Hamburg and Altona during the Confessional Age* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 7, 172–173.

8 Bernd Roeck, *Außenseiter Randgruppen, Minderheiten: Fremde im Deutschland der frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 17.

way of distancing from the religious other took place on both sides. Therefore, in a next step, I will discuss how the encounters with representatives of the Lutheran Church were used by the Anabaptists to support a self-understanding as true Christians, who were persecuted by the unfaithful.

Württemberg offers an excellent case study due to the systematic construction of a Lutheran state church (*Landeskirche*) from the Reformation in 1534 and a long-lived Anabaptist minority from the 1520s into the early seventeenth century. The encounters between the two parties resulted in a rich body of sources produced by the Lutheran authorities and to a lesser extent by the Anabaptists themselves, of which the administrative engagement with the religious deviants in the church visitations is particularly fruitful for the present inquiry. Moreover, Württemberg developed an independent Anabaptist policy which, contrary to the imperial laws, rejected the death penalty and instead relied on patient instruction and a graduated system of punishment according to the degree of the offence. This policy was based on decidedly Lutheran ideas, which were particularly influenced by the ideas of the Lutheran theologian Johannes Brenz (1499–1570).⁹ It offered numerous opportunities to encounter the religious other and to discuss the central points of contention, although it must be taken into account that the Anabaptists had to argue from the defensive in these situations. Still, their statements were heard, debated, and often recorded in writing. For the investigating authorities, it was necessary to gather as much reliable information about the Anabaptists as possible in order to better assess the danger they posed and to find effective countermeasures.

1 The Perceived Threat of Anabaptism among Lutherans

It was easier for the Lutherans to draw clear boundaries with the Catholics than with the Anabaptists and other adherents of the Radical Reformation, since with the latter the lines were more blurred from the beginning. As Thomas Kaufmann has noted, the conflict with early evangelical comrades-in-arms (later dismissed as ‘enthusiasts’) shaped official Lutheran identities more profoundly than their conflict with Catholics.¹⁰ The Diet of Speyer in 1529 has often been hailed as

⁹ On Brenz, see Gottfried Seebaß, “An sint persequendi haeretici? Die Stellung des Johannes Brenz zur Befolgung und Bestrafung der Täufer,” *Blätter für Württembergische Kirchengeschichte* 70 (1970): 40–99.

¹⁰ Kaufmann, “Nahe Fremde,” 190. See also Driedger, *Obedient Heretics*, 3.

the birth of Protestantism. But on the other hand, as Hans-Jürgen Goertz in particular has stressed, it was with this Diet and the following imperial mandate that the ways of the early evangelicals parted. To secure their own contested position, Luther's adherents agreed in Speyer that the more radical reformers would continue to be defined as heretics, while Lutherans would not. From now on, the movement around Luther could in some territories advance to a state church, while the Anabaptists were officially outlawed. Adult baptism became the central distinguishing criterion. The death penalty was applicable to any man or woman old enough to make a conscious choice, who had rebaptized or had been rebaptized. Although imperial legislation was binding to the territories, Württemberg's example shows that it was in practice possible to pursue different lines of action.¹¹

The common ground of the evangelicals, or the early Reformation movement, consisted most of all in embracing the *sola scriptura* principle and taking a critical stance towards the observed grievances in the Church, its hierarchy, and its man-made, and therefore superfluous, traditions. Theologically, the Anabaptists differed from Lutherans most visibly in their rejection of infant baptism and in their different understanding of the Lord's Supper. Baptism was such a central ritual in medieval and early modern Christianity that disagreements over it were extremely difficult to overcome. The rejection of infant baptism also meant the rejection, in both religious and political terms, of a major *rite de passage*, whereby the newborn was accepted as a member into the Christian community. In the Eucharist, Anabaptists, like Zwinglians, denied the presence of the body and blood of Christ and celebrated it as a meal of remembrance. Like baptism, the Eucharist was so central to sixteenth-century Christianity that it aroused great emotion and disagreements were difficult to reconcile, as could be seen in the clashes between Luther and Zwingli in the late 1520s. At the same time, it was precisely these differences that could be used to help create identity and otherness.¹²

Although Anabaptists never posed a numerical threat to Christian society, the ideological threat evoked by their numerous breaks with religious and soci-

11 Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *The Anabaptists* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 118–119. On the *de facto* variety of treatment of Anabaptists, see Claus-Peter Clasen, *Anabaptism: A Social History* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1972), 358–422.

12 On the transgressions of Christian norms and traditions by the Anabaptists, see with further references Hans-Jürgen Goertz, "Radical Religiosity in the German Reformation," in *A Companion to the Reformation World*, ed. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 70–85; Astrid von Schlachta, *Gefahr oder Segen? Die Täufer in der politischen Kommunikation* (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2009), 26–27.

etal traditions was perceived as very real. Instead of forming a coherent group as the label ‘Anabaptist,’ coined by their opponents, suggests, Anabaptism was a highly heterogenous movement. Literally, ‘Anabaptist’ means ‘re-baptizer’ and points to the most well-known feature attested to the Anabaptists, the believer’s baptism.¹³ Other common traits were the Anabaptists’ criticism of the slow progress and the lack of visible moral impact of the Reformation. Their critique placed the Anabaptists in opposition with not only the Roman church, but also the emerging Protestant churches. Imperial and local mandates against the Anabaptists, one of the most notable being the imperial mandate issued in Speyer in 1529, legitimized their persecution in many cases as both heretics and criminals.¹⁴ At the same time, the first anti-Anabaptist mandates and decrees also created long-lasting stereotypes. In the 1520s, the public image of Anabaptists was influenced in particular by some groups’ links with Thomas Müntzer and the 1525 Peasants’ War, aggravating the fear of armed rebellion, and rumours of ecstatic Anabaptist gatherings, uncontrolled lay prophecies, and radical experiments with sexuality, marriage, and community of goods. In the 1530s, these negative images were reinforced by the radical features of the Kingdom of Münster.

Anabaptism in Württemberg was in the second half of the sixteenth century a lay movement, most popular among artisans and peasants. The main groups sending out missionaries and building networks or even underground congregations were the Swiss Brethren, successors of the Anabaptists in the Zurich region, and the Hutterites, who had been able to establish relatively stable communities in Moravia. Measured by the entries of Anabaptists in the magisterial records, there was a clear rise in Anabaptist numbers from the early 1570s onwards. This may be due to various factors, such as the fact that the authorities in this phase were striving for a more differentiated and therefore more precisely documented confrontation with Anabaptism, but also that Württemberg had become an active battleground for the competing Hutterite and Swiss Anabaptist groups.¹⁵

Anabaptism seemed to appeal to part of the laity, especially those unsatisfied with the official church, on account of their pious and modest lifestyle

¹³ In fact, not all Anabaptist groups consistently refused to baptize children. See e.g. Furner, “Lay Casuistry,” 439–440.

¹⁴ Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, 7.

¹⁵ Claus-Peter Clasen, *Die Wiedertäufer im Herzogtum Württemberg und in benachbarten Herrschaften: Ausbreitung, Geisteswelt und Soziologie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1965), 65–68. On the Hutterites, see Schlachta, *Hutterische Konfession*.

and, as I have argued elsewhere,¹⁶ because they did not understand them as fundamentally others as the authorities wished for. In Lutheran Württemberg, the Anabaptists threatened not only the general core of Christian society, but particularly the Lutheran faith and order with their persistent criticism. Lutheran authorities therefore feared that the more visible the moral and religious shortcomings of the Lutherans, the greater the appeal of the Anabaptists' simple way of life.¹⁷ The Anabaptists further claimed, if not a general toleration for their alternative conceptions, at least permission to withdraw unmolested into a community of true Christians and not to be forced into attending official church life. For the Lutheran Church, which was only in the process of consolidation in the decades following the Reformation, this could only be understood as a radical challenge.

2 Encountering 'Others' in Post-Reformation Württemberg

The foundations of Württemberg's anti-Anabaptist policies were laid in the *Täuferordnung* of 1536 under Duke Ulrich (1487–1550). In it, the course of proceedings was formulated from arrest, imprisonment, and release after a recantation and an oath. Furthermore, the instruction of Anabaptists by theologians was integrated into the procedure and the suppression of sects was included in the regular tasks of the church visitations. Later ordinances followed in 1558, 1571, and 1584. Duke Christoph (1515–1568) and his long-time theological adviser Johannes Brenz especially spent much time pondering the Anabaptist question. In two treatises published as early as in 1528 and 1530, Brenz had profiled himself as an opponent of capital punishment for Anabaptists, making him the only Protestant theologian of the sixteenth century to take such a position in print. In Württemberg, this position was not uncontested, but in the end accepted. However, Brenz was not advocating religious toleration or recognition of Anabaptists. He regarded Anabaptists rather as people erring in religious issues than scheming for sedition, for which Brenz, too, considered death penalties as adequate. Religious errors, on the other hand, were according to Brenz best countered by

16 Päivi Räisänen-Schröder, "Appeal and Survival of Anabaptism in Early Modern Germany," in *Lived Religion and the Long Reformation in Northern Europe, c. 1300–1700*, ed. Sari Katajala-Peltomaa and Raisa Maria Toivo (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 104–127.

17 Elsa Bernhofer-Pippert, *Täuferische Denkweisen und Lebensformen im Spiegel oberdeutscher Täuferverhöre* (Münster Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1967), 127.

preaching and teaching Lutheran doctrine. This lay in the church's responsibility, while temporal authorities were to secure societal peace and order.¹⁸

Duke Christoph argued in 1559 that the authorities had to be prepared to deal with various forms of heresy and blasphemy "so that no one would be punished more than necessary." The Anabaptist ordinance of 1571 was also intended to cover as broadly as possible the various forms of Anabaptism, with their mitigating and aggravating circumstances, so that the authorities would be able to recognize the dangers and act accordingly. Similarly, the system of punishment was graduated from reproach, fines, and imprisonment to confiscation of property and exile. While the later ordinances did not essentially change Württemberg's chosen anti-Anabaptist policies, they increasingly refined and differentiated the images of Anabaptism from the original dichotomy between leaders and followers, or the 'seducers' and the 'seduced.' In addition, the authorities' overall estimate of the threat posed by Anabaptism shifted from fear of armed rebellion towards religious error and disobedience to both state and church.¹⁹

The duchy of Württemberg officially adopted Lutheranism in 1534 and dedicated the following decades to building up a well-organized Lutheran Church. Church and state leaders saw the eradication of moral and religious deviance as an imperative step towards a functioning and harmonious Christian society. Central means to instil official teachings at the local level were sermons and other services provided by the parish pastors. Their work and at least an outward conformity of the parishioners were monitored regularly, usually once or twice a year, in the church visitations. Further, the inspections should uncover possible moral or religious "diseases" in the parishes, as the 1547 visitation ordinance put it.²⁰

Achim Landwehr has identified two central types of otherness in early modern German administrative sources, namely 'enemies' (*Feinde*) and 'strangers' (*Fremde*). The enemy, a necessary building block of one's own identity, can be characterized as a clearly recognizable 'friend in reverse,' whose actions are fa-

¹⁸ Seebaß, "An sint," 51–53.

¹⁹ Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 365; Räisänen, *Ketzer im Dorf*, 157–159.

²⁰ *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 16, *Baden-Württemberg II: Herzogtum Württemberg*, ed. Sabine Arend and Thomas Bergholz (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 154. On the visitations, see Martin Brecht and Hermann Ehmer, *Südwestdeutsche Reformationsgeschichte: Zur Einführung der Reformation im Herzogtum Württemberg 1534* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1984), 264–265, 320–323; Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 256–267.

miliar and as such predictable.²¹ Typical enemies were, for instance, the Jews, who had a fixed place in Christian salvation history as the scapegoats for Jesus's crucifixion, or Muslims, as the expansion of Islam was interpreted in sixteenth-century Christian eschatology as a sign of the approaching Apocalypse.²² However, these groups did not dominate everyday encounters and bureaucratic interaction in Württemberg.

In the visitation records, the efforts to identify the second category of otherness, the stranger, are more prominent. According to Achim Landwehr, the stranger in early modern administration is somebody completely alien and unknown, who threatens one's worldview and way of life by his unpredictability. Early modern officials sought to control the strangers by first collecting as much information as possible about them and then assessing the degree of the threat in the light of the material obtained. Therefore, in the administrative material of the sixteenth century, the stranger is usually described in more detail than the more clearly defined enemy. This applies to some extent to the Anabaptists, as I will clarify below. Moreover, beggars, criminals, vagrants, and the Roma, were, for example, typical representatives of strangers who were difficult to place in the Lutheran authorities' worldview.²³ At the end of the sixteenth century, Catholics could also be regarded as such easily identifiable enemies, as the decades after the Reformation had gradually clarified and cemented the main differences, at least among the Lutheran elites.

Fitting Anabaptists into this pattern was not a straightforward endeavour. As a movement classified as heretical, Anabaptists could be integrated into the long history of Christian heretics. Especially the Anabaptist leaders, who perhaps had formed a more coherent view on doctrinal issues themselves and actively promoted them, could qualify as full-fledged enemies. Many of them certainly epitomized the stereotypical view of the heretic as particularly headstrong. However, the simple dichotomy of the early anti-Anabaptist mandates and ordinances as leaders and adherents was not enough to explain and counteract the many shades of Anabaptism that the inquiring magistrates in Württemberg were facing. Therefore, based on their numerous encounters in real life, the officials gradually modified and further differentiated between different degrees of Anabap-

²¹ See also Kaufmann, "Nahe Fremde," 190.

²² Thomas Kaufmann, "Die theologische Bewertung des Judentums im Protestantismus des späteren 16. Jahrhunderts (1530–1600)," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 91 (2000): 191–237; Achim Landwehr, "Policey vor Ort: Die Implementation von Policeyordnungen in der ländlichen Gesellschaft der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Policey und frühneuzeitliche Gesellschaft*, ed. Karl Härter (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000), 54–56.

²³ Landwehr, "Policey vor Ort," 46–49, 50–51, 66.

tism and used a lot of effort in trying to sort the villagers interrogated into these categories. The most striking modification is the addition of a whole new category of Anabaptist otherness, that of the ‘stubborn women,’ into the ordinance of 1584, as the active role played by women in disseminating Anabaptist ideas and literature could not be dismissed as insignificant womenfolk’s business anymore.²⁴

For the Lutherans, it was vital to establish and uphold the differences in regard to the Anabaptists and clearly mark them as a heretical current of the Reformation. The long-lived Anabaptist influences in Württemberg, however, continuously challenged this view and, in the perspective of the leading officials at least, undermined the laborious project of rooting Lutheranism in the parishes. Therefore it was essential to, firstly, identify the local factors and people enabling the spread of Anabaptism, secondly, render them as harmless as possible, and, thirdly, provide the populace with better role models and improve their understanding of the Lutheran teachings.

3 Encountering Anabaptist Leaders

Anabaptist leaders were recognized in the Württemberg ordinances as well-connected and extremely mobile, and therefore particularly dangerous.²⁵ In continuation of traditional perceptions of heresies, they were portrayed as obstinate, insidious, and preaching and baptizing against the orders of the authorities, for example at night-time or in secluded places – a clear inversion of the settled Lutheran pastor. The authorities further described the Anabaptist leaders, as was usual, as ruthless seducers who cheated unsuspecting people out of their possessions, destroyed family ties, and jeopardized the salvation of the misguided. In so doing, they eroded the very foundations of Christian society, caused disorder and, in the worst cases, incited resistance against the Lutheran way of life. The dangerous nature of the leaders was further exacerbated by the fact that they were difficult to identify externally and were hardly ever denounced by the local populace.

In 1571, the leading Lutheran churchmen in Württemberg drafted a revocation ceremony for Anabaptist leaders that was attached to the new Anabaptist

²⁴ Weiter Vnderthenig Bedenckhen vnd Ordnung die Widertauffer betreffend, 28 January 1584, HStAS A63/42, 29–32.

²⁵ For an analysis of their social background, see Claus-Peter Clasen, “The Anabaptist Leaders: Their Numbers and Background. Switzerland, Austria, South and Central Germany 1525–1618,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 49:2 (1975): 122–164. See also Räisänen, *Ketzer im Dorf*, 127–132.

ordinance. The ceremony was designed to present the victory of the Lutheran Church over Anabaptism through the figure of a defeated and repenting Anabaptist leader in front of an audience consisting both of laypeople and clergymen. The negative role model of the Anabaptist served to present Lutheran teachings as Christian and highlighted *ex negativo* the qualities of good, obedient Christians, who attended Lutheran services and lived according to Lutheran ideals. The steps of the ceremony were outlined with great care, but first and foremost, they reflected the hoped-for state of affairs rather than actual reality.

Just before the beginning of the ceremony, the Anabaptist was to be led from his seat near the altar into the middle of the church for all to see, while the congregation sang a hymn appropriate to the occasion.²⁶ The Lutheran clergyman officiating the ceremony should then begin by announcing that the Devil himself had seduced the repentant into the forbidden, heretical, and dangerous sect of Anabaptism. The cleric's pre-formulated speech constructed a clear contrast between good and evil, emphasizing on the one hand the ungodliness of the Anabaptist teachings and the "great and terrible damage" the Anabaptist leader had caused to Christian society. On the other, it highlighted the role of the devoted teaching by the Lutheran churchmen in achieving the change. The first part of the ceremony ended with the clergyman reminding the faithful, with a biblical reference to the prodigal son, that Christian forgiveness entailed welcoming sincerely repented sinners back into the Christian community with open arms. This is in line with the general aim of Württemberg's policy to reintegrate, not destroy Anabaptists as people.

In the second part, the repenting Anabaptist leader was to publicly recant his former beliefs and to warn the audience about the dangers of Anabaptism to salvation and social order. He had to respond "clearly and loudly" to a series of doctrinal statements on baptism, the Eucharist, and the priestly office, as read aloud by the Lutheran clergyman. In doing so, the repentant publicly refuted key Anabaptist beliefs and, at the same time, validated Lutheran ones. Moreover, the questions and answers served to affirm secular and ecclesiastical authority. Finally, the former heretic was to address the audience with the following words of warning:

I severely warn everyone about this dangerous and seductive sect of Anabaptists, especially their leaders who preach in secret and without permission. I appeal to everyone to take part diligently in the services and sacraments, thus strengthening and increasing their faith by

26 Bedenken vnd Ordnung die Widertauffer betreffend, 16 January 1571, HStAS A63/42, 15r–15v.

the power of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God, for the improvement of their neighbour and for their own salvation.²⁷

By implication, an image of the Lutheran Church was drawn here, whose theologically correct sermons enjoyed official blessing and contributed to the salvation of the parishioners. Moreover, the quote points to the communal character of lived Lutheranism, where proper conduct and, ultimately, salvation were both individual and collective concerns.

After these steps, the repentant was to receive absolution and be re-integrated into the one and only Christian, i.e., Lutheran, church. Afterwards, the return to the Lutheran Church was sealed with signatures on an official record. Breaking the promise was subject to a penalty, and the penitent also committed to this with his signature. This was not only a legal affirmation, but also the symbolic subordination of the repentant under both church and crown. The crown, for its part, was here able to demonstrate Christian mercy by readmitting the repentant into Christian society.²⁸

This staging of events was intended as a triumphal celebration of Lutheran doctrines and ideals, with the aim of convincing the audience of the Lutheran Church's victory over the Anabaptist heresy. It should also instil in the minds of the churchgoers the official Lutheran norms and teachings as well as the urgent need to attend Lutheran services and communion, from which the non-heretical parishioners were also slipping at times. A particularly dramatic and effective way of doing this was to proclaim the superiority of Lutheranism physically through the mouth of a former Anabaptist leader; someone who had devoted much time and effort to undermine the Lutheran message was now defeated by the superior creed. The ceremony appealed strongly not only to the sense of hearing (singing, vocal speech, sermon), but also to the sense of sight and the emotions of those present, in order to draw a line between true and false faith in the most striking way possible.

The Württemberg church leaders had carefully designed the course of the ceremony and even the exact words the repentant Anabaptist should use to revoke his old beliefs. However, we have no information if it was ever carried out in

²⁷ Bedenken vnd Ordnung die Widertauffer betreffend, 16 January 1571, HStAS A63/42, 21v–22r.

²⁸ On the symbolic power of early modern rulership, see with further references Antje Flüchter, "Konfessionalisierung in kulturalistischer Perspektive? Überlegungen am Beispiel der Herzogtümer Jülich-Berg," in *Was heißt Kulturgeschichte des Politischen?*, ed. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2005), 225–252; Landwehr, "Policey vor Ort"; Ulinka Rublack, "Frühneuzeitliche staatliche und lokale Herrschaftspraxis in Württemberg," *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 24:3 (1997): 347–378.

this manner. It was initially drafted for a particularly headstrong Anabaptist leader, Blasius Greiner, active in the Schorndorf area east of Stuttgart in the second half of the sixteenth century. He belonged to a long-time dissident family from the village of Walkersbach, part of the large parish of Urbach, which was in the eyes of the authorities notorious for its religiously opinionated inhabitants and lazy churchgoers. In 1577, Blasius Greiner was reported to have recanted and later relapsed to his Anabaptist ways. He had left behind three sons, who, however, offered him and other Anabaptists shelter when necessary, held similar beliefs as their father, and, moreover, did not attend Lutheran services or communion.²⁹ With Anabaptists in at least three generations, the Greiner family has been described as “a family who embraced Anabaptism with enthusiasm and survived by whatever means seemed appropriate: recantation, promise to obey the state church, no promise at all.”³⁰ No wonder that victory of a member of especially this family would have been a sweet triumph for the Lutheran authorities indeed.

Although the frustrating encounters with Blasius Greiner had initially prompted the ceremony’s text, it was, however, from the outset intended to apply more widely. Still, the text tells us more about the aspirations of the Lutheran authorities, trying to root out Anabaptism and instil Lutheran models especially on the village level, than any real-life encounters with repentant Anabaptist leaders. However, the encounters between the parties in church visitations and interrogations rather sharpened the differences in opinion than alleviated them.

4 Anabaptists Encountering Lutherans

While the encounters with Anabaptism could in day-to-day practice be experienced by the authorities as an administrative nuisance, albeit with severe implications to the functioning of Christian society and the salvation of its subjects, for the interrogated Anabaptists and their sympathizers they presented a tangible danger of losing freedom, property, and the possibility to live out one’s chosen faith. While the protocols are penned by Lutheran officials and, consequently, with their specific interests and beliefs guiding both the interrogations and their subsequent reporting, it is possible to discern some of the Anabaptist side’s re-

²⁹ LKAS A26/466 Sectarii I, 218r.

³⁰ John S. Oyer, “Nicodemites among Württemberg Anabaptists,” *Menmonite Quarterly Review* 71:4 (1997): 505.

actions in the material. In addition, surviving letters by Anabaptists can complement this view and make it possible to trace the other side of the identity-shaping process.³¹ For it was not only the Lutherans, who were influenced by the encounters with the other. Anabaptists also were shaped by and themselves actively shaped the encounters and their subsequent interpretations within their own religious framework.

Anabaptist mentality has been characterized as revolving around martyrdom and suffering. Anabaptists wanted to follow in the footsteps of Christ and saw themselves as part of the long chain of Christians persecuted for their faith.³² Therefore, persecution could be seen as a sign of belonging to the chosen ones. In the words of the Hutterite Paul Glock (d. 1585), a shoemaker-turned-missionary, “the more they see that they are a godless Christendom, the more fervently they want to destroy us.”³³ As actual martyrdom was rendered impossible by Württemberg’s refusal to execute religious deviants, a true Christian’s suffering could be experienced and demonstrated in interrogations and other encounters with authorities.

We have to assume that people did not go unprepared into interrogations in front of the authorities. By the end of the sixteenth century, villagers in general had developed a good sense of how to best argue for their own ends in the church visitations.³⁴ As for those suspected of Anabaptist tendencies, two lines of action can be detected. The more broadly employed one was that of trying to give away as little incriminating information as possible and thus minimizing the harm, a strategy that may well have been approved or even recommended by the Anabaptist elders.³⁵ Those seeking an opportunity to proselytize or admonish

31 Not many letters by rank-and-file Anabaptists survive, mostly only if confiscated by hostile authorities. However, especially Anabaptist missionaries were keen letter-writers and their writings have been preserved by their peers.

32 Brad S. Gregory, “Anabaptist Martyrdom: Imperatives, Experience, and Memorialization,” in *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521–1700*, ed. John D. Roth and James M. Stayer (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 467–506.

33 *Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer*, vol. 1, *Herzogtum Württemberg*, ed. Gustav Bossert (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachfolger, 1930), 361.

34 See e.g. Päivi Räisänen-Schröder, “Improving the Christian Community: Agents and Objects of Control in Early Modern Church Visitations,” in *Morality, Crime, and Social Control in Europe 1500–1900*, ed. Satu Lidman and Olli Matikainen (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2014), 127–155.

35 Furner, “Lay Casuistry”; Jecker, *Ketzer*, 599–600; Oyer, “Nicodemites.”; Räisänen, *Ketzer im Dorf*, 289–314.

the Lutherans, or to confess their faith in the face of their adversaries, chose a more open confrontation.³⁶

The Anabaptist Matthias Schätzlin of Beutelsbach, whose encounters with the authorities are recorded from 1605 to 1618, is a case in point. Not only did he confess that he had joined the Anabaptists after having received a revelation, but he even (which is rare) stated his affinity specifically to the Swiss Brethren.³⁷ After his interrogation in front of the Stuttgart consistory in 1611, Schätzlin, who was by now being treated as a headstrong Anabaptist leader, was heard to boast in his home village how artfully he had delivered his counterarguments to the high Lutheran theologians, presenting the confrontation as a victory to himself and the Anabaptist cause.³⁸

The sources suggest the hardening of the frontlines in or after the confrontations of the suspected Anabaptists with the inquiring authorities, but also on account of repressive measures imposed on friends, neighbours, or family members. Protesting against such measures could then, successively, lead to a person herself being treated as an Anabaptist. One Margaretha Kurtz from Oppelsbohm, for example, declared in 1586 that she had withdrawn from official Lutheran church life because her husband had been expelled as an Anabaptist, an unforgivable action in her mind. Kurtz contrasted her husband's piety with the loose morals of many of her Lutheran contemporaries, who were not duly punished by the Lutheran Church.³⁹ Similarly, the treatment of Hans Krätz's daughter Christina as an obstinate Anabaptist and the confiscation of her property in Urbach at the turn of the seventeenth century was dismissed by her father as unreasonable and pushed him further into the Anabaptist camp.⁴⁰

Accusations brought forward by the interrogated that demonstrate the distinction of Anabaptist views from the Lutheran ones include, apart from the criticism of inefficient church discipline, which was hotly debated also among Württemberg's leading theologians, a similarly lax understanding of the Eucharist that allowed sinners to participate, the unjust or too harsh persecution of the peace-loving Anabaptists, and the enforcement of attendance at the Lutheran services. Some of these concerns were shared more widely in the villages, explaining in part why Anabaptists were so rarely denounced. The Anabaptist image of Lutheranism first and foremost points to the failure of the Lutheran churches to improve the moral standards of the contemporaries. Instead of tack-

36 Bernhofer-Pippert, *Täuferische Lebensweisen*, 122.

37 HStAS A281/1122, 16–19 (11 March 1605).

38 LKA A26/466 II, 136v–137r (Spring 1611).

39 LKA A1/1586 II, f. 82v.

40 HStAS A282/3094c, Nr 14, 27.

ling the problem, they put their energies into persecuting innocent, simple believers. Lutherans were thus labelled hypocrites and Pharisees, whose faith had no true basis in Scripture as it did not show any visible results in manners.⁴¹

Many of these views recur in the writings of the Hutterite missionary Paul Glock and vividly illustrate the Anabaptist ways of drawing boundaries and presenting Lutherans as “children of Satan.”⁴² Württemberg-born Glock was imprisoned in Hohenwittlingen castle for almost two decades in the late sixteenth century, which provided him with ample opportunities to engage in debates with both his fellow prisoners and his overseers. He welcomed these encounters as possibilities to evangelize and defend his views, and was bitterly disappointed if fellow prisoners from a rival group or Lutheran clergymen did not give in. The sharp contrasts created in Glock’s letters, songs, and theological treatises were aimed mainly at his fellow believers in Moravia and served to underline the ungodliness of the other party. Considering Glock’s high esteem among the Hutterite establishment, his writings can be seen in accordance with and strengthening the group’s official identities.

5 Conclusions

The rooting out of heresy was regarded by sixteenth-century Lutheran authorities as an essential way to ensure both social stability and the salvation of their subjects. For Lutheran self-understanding, it was vital to establish Anabaptists as heretics. Moreover, the Anabaptists were required as necessary antagonists or ‘others’ that helped in the establishing of boundaries between permitted and forbidden forms of religiosity on all levels of society – although the ordinances and visitations mainly targeted the middle and lower levels of officials. They were, for their part, responsible in imposing the norms locally; a process that was complex and by no means straightforward. Nonetheless, the identification of heresies and heretics was a starting point to developing and distributing official Lutheran identities by way of distancing themselves from these phenomena. The focus here has been on Anabaptism, but similar dynamics can be observed in the official confessions’ delineations from other post-Reformation minorities

⁴¹ See e.g. HStAS A282/3094c, Nr 14, 27; LKAS Sectarii I, 40v–41r.

⁴² *Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer*, 347, 360.

such as the Schwenckfelders in southern Germany.⁴³ Similar developments, further, occurred on the Anabaptist side.

The analysis of the two-way shaping of identities that has been analysed here using the example of Württemberg is relevant also in a more general framework if one understands the contemporary debates around Anabaptism as “a history of the struggle for norms that defined confessional and political inclusion and exclusion.”⁴⁴ I agree with Astrid von Schlachta, who has argued for first identifying the sometimes rapidly changing dynamics of inclusion and exclusion of Anabaptists before it is even possible to consider them as religiously and politically deviant historical actors. Only after that can they be adequately placed in the larger context of early modern period history, from which the Anabaptists have often been separated in older research in particular.

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⁴³ Caroline Gritschke, “Via Media”: *Spiritualistische Lebenswelten und Konfessionalisierung. Das süddeutsche Schwenckfeldertum im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2006), 357–358.

⁴⁴ Schlachta, *Gefahr*, 15.

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Nicolas Faucher

Chapter 7

Introspection and Other Faiths in the Medieval Latin Tradition

Introduction

This paper deals with introspection and other faiths in the medieval Latin tradition, by means of an examination of medieval views on wrong belief. What is wrong belief? In the most common sense it simply means false belief. There are, however, many cases in which it seems clear to us that there is a belief that should be held, even though there can be no absolute certainty regarding its truth, such as when serious scientific experiments yield evidence that is unambiguously in favor of one member of an alternative.

Broadly speaking, then, wrong belief can be defined as belief that is not right, or incorrect, so as to include this kind of case. Anything that is not in conformity with a given set of rules can be defined as incorrect, the question being what ruleset should be referred to. Let us take as a point of departure that, most commonly, when dealing with beliefs in the broadest sense of the term, the main rule that should be followed in their formation is that they should be rational, by which I mean that they should be produced by consciously following a procedure that ensures they will be as close as possible to the actual truth of the matter. Sometimes it can mean that the belief in question is unquestionably true, as is the case of propositions known by themselves in the medieval conceptual framework.

A wrong belief here is thus a belief that does not result from the examination of all the available evidence or that has not been produced by correct reasoning regarding the truth of what is believed. We can call it an epistemically wrong belief.

There is, however, another sense in which a belief might be considered wrong. In a given situation, it might be that, independently of what is epistemically right, it is morally right to entertain a given belief, for instance if a close friend asks me to believe in her innocence independently, or even in spite of the available evidence. Such a belief may indeed be the only thing a loyal friend should have, and it may be more important in this case to display the moral virtue of loyalty rather than epistemic prudence. Let us say that, in this kind of case, a wrong belief is an unreasonable belief, because it does not result from

the examination of all the available evidence or because it has not been produced by correct reasoning regarding not the truth of the belief in question but whether it is morally good to hold it. We can call such a belief a morally wrong belief.

Medieval theories of faith (restricted here to theories elaborated by thirteenth- and fourteenth-century theologians) offer good examples of right and wrong beliefs in both senses. Medieval Latin theologians and philosophers share the assumption that their faith, which they usually consider to be a kind of propositional belief, is different not only from other kinds of propositional belief (knowledge, science, opinion as well as other beliefs with different epistemic statuses) but also from similar beliefs which bear on different contents than the truthful and morally good faith of the Catholic Church. In particular, heretics, Jews, Muslims, either firmly entertain beliefs that bear on propositions that are not those of the Catholic faith and that contradict them or do not entertain and firmly deny some of the Catholic beliefs that are essential in winning salvation.

Moreover, medieval theologians contend that these beliefs rely on other psychological mechanisms than the truthful and morally good faith of the Catholic Church. The acts of faith of non-Catholics are produced by purely natural mechanisms, whereas the acts of Catholic faith rely on supernatural mechanisms. Indeed, at baptism, Catholics receive the supernatural gift of faith, a *habitus* or disposition to believe the objects of faith. Since the supernatural faith of Christians comes from God, medieval thinkers agree that its actualization in acts of faith can only yield true beliefs, because God does not lie, and that this disposition is necessary for beliefs to be morally good, since divine grace is needed for any act to be truly good.

For these beliefs to be considered right and other, concurrent and incompatible beliefs, wrong, in the sense I just defined, it would be necessary that believers know that their beliefs are truthful and good. This is in no way obvious. Indeed, even though some objects of faith can be demonstrated to be true by reasoning, it must not be required in principle that they should be so demonstrated. Many believers, by nature or by circumstance, are incapable of such demonstrations but nonetheless have a duty to believe and should be considered morally responsible for their beliefs. This means that there must be another way than rational investigation for them to be able to elicit acts of belief on a well-informed basis that is required for such acts to be morally qualifiable. In other terms, even though believers have no duty to hold rational beliefs, they do have a duty to hold reasonable beliefs, and this entails that they must have some non-discursive evidence that their beliefs are morally right and other beliefs are morally wrong.

In this paper, I will investigate the hypothesis according to which, in the minds of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Latin theologians, introspection can provide such an access and allow the Catholic believer to subjectively appreciate the epistemic and moral differences that exist between her beliefs and other beliefs, both regarding their content and regarding the psychological mechanisms of their production. By introspection, I mean here the capacity for a given epistemic and moral subject to assess the value of her belief not by an examination of the object of this belief but by the examination of her own belief as it is subjectively and interiorly apprehended by herself, as well as of the psychological process that resulted in this belief.

An important point, which is directly related to the question whether the very ideas of acceptance, recognition, and toleration could emerge in medieval times, is the question whether such introspection, if it exists, yields more openness towards other beliefs that are seen as wrong or, conversely, strengthens the tendency to radically reject them. Indeed, such an inner examination could go one of two ways: either the properties that distinguish the truthful and good character of Catholic belief against other kinds of belief are somehow made apparent to the self-examining believer, or they are not. If they are, it stands to reason that the non-Catholic believer's responsibility in wrongly believing is increased, since, if she wanted, she could conceivably assess the available evidence and rationally or reasonably renounce her wrong beliefs. Conversely, if no one can tell the difference between Catholic faith and other kinds of belief, then it does not make much sense to count the wrongful believer as responsible for her wrong beliefs. Moreover, these beliefs could be attained for all the right reasons, if they are the most probable or the most moral beliefs one can hold in a given situation, which means that they would, in fact, be right beliefs even though they are false. In this case, it would make no sense to count the wrongful believer as responsible for her wrong beliefs, since it was most reasonable for her to hold them given the evidence.

I will be briefly examining the views of thirteenth-century authors, in particular Bonaventure (1217–1274), Thomas Aquinas (1224–1274), Peter John Olivi (1248–1298), and John Duns Scotus (ca. 1266–1308). I will show that Bonaventure sets the stage for the process by which we come to believe and which we may have introspective knowledge about. I will then argue that Aquinas makes it possible for the faithful to distinguish between belief relying on God's testimony and belief that does not, which capacity is the foundation of the rejection of heretics. This capacity, however, must not make it too manifest that God has revealed the objects of faith, otherwise acts of faith would cease to be meritorious. Olivi, whose view is similar to that of Aquinas, displays, by contrast, strong doubt regarding our capacity to know the origins of our beliefs.

Finally, Scotus, taking a similar, but much stronger, doubt to a radical conclusion, says introspective knowledge cannot give us any access to the fact that God has revealed anything to us. Nonetheless, he maintains an absolute rejection of other beliefs that begs explanation.

1 Early Thirteenth-Century Views: Little Room for Introspection

If one looks at early thirteenth-century texts, such as William of Auxerre's (1145–1231) *Summa aurea* or Philip the Chancellor's (1160–1263) *Summa de bono*, one can see that not much space is devoted to the subjective experience of the believer. What happens when an act of faith is elicited is more a matter of describing the nature and properties of this act than of establishing what the believer might know of it. The effect of grace, of possessing the habitus of faith given by God at baptism, is that some propositions that must be believed will immediately appear as true with the utmost certainty. This phenomenon is likened to how propositions *per se notae* appear true by the sole definition of their terms: just as one immediately and evidently assents to the proposition “a whole is greater than its part” when one knows the definition of the terms, the believer will immediately assent to the proposition “God is three and one” not because it is evident but because of the effect of grace.¹

¹ William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, l. III, tom. 1, ed. J. Ribailier (Paris: CNRS, 1986), 199: “Sicut enim hoc principium: ‘Omne totum est maius sua parte’, habet aliquantam illuminationem per modum nature illuminantis intellectum, ita hoc principium ‘Deus est remunerator omnium bonorum’, et alii articuli habent in se illuminationem per modum gratie, qua Deus illuminat intellectum.”

Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, vol. 2, ed. N. Wicki (Berne: Francke, 1985), 572–573: “Quedam faciunt certitudinem ex luce sua, que tam manifesta est quod velit nolit assentit mens, ut in universalibus: omne totum est maius sua parte. Sic non est de fide, cum lux eius sit in enigmate, sed hanc virtutem potius habet ex informatione conscientie. Quod patet; de hac enim: omne totum est maius sua parte numquam potuit dubitare, sed quam cito auditur creditur et intelligitur. Sed/ antequam illuminetur quid a Deo per fidem de articulo ut est: Filium Dei incarnatum esse, dubitare potest et potest ei persuaderi per exempla vel rationes, licet non ita evidenter. Sed si prima veritas fidem inspiraverit, ita rectificat et informat quod, sicut quis velit nolit consentit huic: omne totum est maius sua parte, et hoc propter suam lucem et evidentiam, ita velit nolit, si habet fidei habitum, artatur ad consentiendum et ita sentiendum. Et quod habet istud per lucem, habet istud per conscientie informationem, quia ita informata est conscientia et ita artatur quod contra se ipsam iam negaret, cum ita sentiat, et de adulto loquor.”

This idea is made all the more mysterious by the fact that in Philip the Chancellor and Alexander of Hales, it is the result of what they call the “information of conscience” that is obtained through grace.² Conscience, for these authors and for all medieval authors, is a faculty that has to do not with judgments of truth but with judgments of goodness. How is it, then, that conscience should be involved in what seems merely to be an immediate assent to the truth of a proposition? Furthermore, how is it possible for the faithful to be considered responsible for their beliefs when it seems that their will is not involved in performing their acts of faith since the possession of the infused *habitus* of faith is enough for faithful assent to occur upon apprehending an object of faith?

A common answer can be found all along the thirteenth century in authors who play down the role of the will in the performance of the act of faith, such as William of Auxerre³ and Godfrey of Fontaines (d. 1309).⁴ In their view, the only

Alexander of Hales (attributed). *Summa universis theologiae*, vol. 2, ed. Bernardini Klumper and the Quaracchi Fathers (Quaracchi: ex typ. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1928), 1107–1108: “[...] quaedam habent certitudinem ratione evidentiae, ut principia, quae sunt per se nota, ut ‘de quolibet affirmatio vel negatio’. – Quaedam vero habent certitudinem ex informatione conscientiae, et haec est certitudo fidei, sive formatae sive informis. Cum enim prima Veritas fidem inspirat, sic conscientiam informat, ut sicut aliquis cogitur ipsa evidentia consentire isti veritati ‘omne totum est maius sua parte’, ita per habitum infusum fidei ipsa informatione conscientiae arctatur et cogitur consentire Veritati primae propter se. Unde sicut negaret hoc ‘omne totum maius est sua parte’ contra suam conscientiam.”

2 See the passages quoted in the previous footnote.

3 William of Auxerre. *Summa aurea*, l. II, tom. 2, ed. J. Ribailier (Paris: CNRS, 1982), 475–476: “Cecus autem/ spiritualis, licet non possit illuminare se, tamen potest facere aliquid quo facto sequatur quod ipse illuminetur, sicut iste non potest illuminare domum, tamen potest aliquid facere quo facto domus illuminetur, ut aperire finestram. Similiter si iste apperiat hostium liberi arbitrii, id est si faciat quod in se est, statim subintrabit lux vera et illuminabitur spiritualiter; et tunc poterit videre ex ea potentia quam prius habebat; et ita patet quod potentia credendi est naturalis, quia est ante actum et ante habitum.”

4 Godfrey of Fontaines, *Les Quodlibets cinq, six et sept de Godefroid de Fontaines*, ed. M. De Wulf and J. Hoffmans (Louvain: Institut supérieur de philosophie de l’Université, 1914), *Quodlibet* VI, q. 11, 227: “Hoc autem subjacet aliquo modo voluntati in quantum, si etiam cogatur ire ad ecclesiam et recipere sacramentum fidei, scilicet virtute cuius huiusmodi habitus infunditur, si quis obicem non ponat, et etiam audire praedicationem per quam probabilitates ad ea quae sunt fidei inducuntur, vel etiam per se ipsum occurrat sibi cogitatio de his quae fidei sunt et de aliquibus probabilitatibus circa illa per quae homo disponderetur si non poneret per malam voluntatem obicem resistentiae ... et homo per voluntatem potest contra hoc obicem ponere, quia potest homo per dominium voluntatis non assentire effectui baptismi, potest etiam intellectum convertere ad efficacius cogitandum circa rationes contra veritatem fidei, et divertere ab aliis ... et sic cum possit cogi quantum ad multa, tamen quantum ad assentiendum his quae fidei sunt nec rationi sunt evidentiali, sed apparent repugnantia, requiritur voluntas ut removeatur prohibens, scilicet conversio intellectus ad ea quae sunt contra fidem.”

role that the will plays is in the preparation of the actualization of the supernatural habitus of faith, especially by disposing oneself rightly towards grace. Apart from this preparation, grace does all the work.

There is, however, another solution to the problem, which seems to be first put forward by Bonaventure. While building on previous theories and simplifying them, Bonaventure, in his *Sentences* commentary, proposed another interpretation of the effect of grace that, while preserving an element of absolute certainty constrained by grace, nonetheless makes room for the will to freely choose faithful belief. He did this while discussing how the faithful, enjoying God's help through her infused habitus, relates to the articles of faith. Bonaventure explains this relation by means of an etymological development linking the terms *articulus* and *arctatio*:

[T]here is a constraint (*arctatio*) which is incompatible with freedom and there is a constraint which is incompatible with ambiguity; and when [an article] is called an article, that constrains belief (*arctat ad credendum*), it is not called thus because it coerces the will but because it removes ambiguity, because it determinately fixes the mind of the believer in the very truth of the article, so that it is no way inclined otherwise.⁵

If this fixation of the mind were the same thing as its adhesion, then the question of the role of the will would be solved: the article, when apprehended, would produce the assent to itself without any other causal factor being required. But it seems that Bonaventure has something else in mind when he mentions this fixation. He says:

[J]ust as what is determined to signify something, though it could previously signify different things, is called an articulated word (*vox*), similarly, [an article] is called an article, because one must determinately believe it and assent to it, once all ambiguity and hesitation has been removed.⁶

Though the text is not perfectly clear, it seems to me that, together with the previous text, it appears to defend the following idea: what happens when the ar-

5 Bonaventure of Bagnoreggio, *Liber III Sententiarum*, ed. L.-M. Bello (Opera theologica selecta 3) (Quaracchi: ex. typ. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1941), 519: "... est arctatio quae repugnat libertati et est arctatio quae repugnat ambiguitati; et cum dicitur articulus, quia arctat ad credendum, hoc non dicitur per coactionem voluntatis, sed hoc dicitur per remotionem ambiguitatis, quia in ipsa veritate articuli determinate figitur mens credentis, ut nullatenus ad partem aliam inclinetur." Hereafter the work cited will be abbreviated to OTS.

6 Bonaventura, OTS, 519: "... sicut dicitur vox articulata, quae ad significandum aliquid est determinata, cum prius in se indifferens esset ad significandum diversa, sic articulus dicitur, quia ipsum oportet determinate credere et ei assentire, omni remota ambiguitate et vacillatione."

ticle is apprehended by the faithful is that she becomes inclined to believe it voluntarily because the faithful's mind becomes fixed as regards its truth, not inasmuch as she immediately assents to its truth but in such a way that she immediately knows that it is a proposition the truth of which she must assent to.

Thus, in Bonaventure, an act of faith seems to have two stages of production: first, an object is apprehended as something that must be believed without any doubt; then, should it choose to act upon this moral apprehension, the will causes the act of faith to occur. There is no room for introspection in Bonaventure, inasmuch as he does not question what believers know of this process. But his view sets the stage for later doctrines, especially Aquinas's and Olivi's, which defend similar positions and do make room for such introspective questioning.

2 Aquinas: The Subjective Need to Discern between Right and Wrong

Aquinas is not much more prolific than Bonaventure in terms of psychological descriptions, but he is in terms of theological distinctions. While, in his *Senten-ces* commentary, he ascribes the faithful's capacity to know what should be believed, as well as what should not be, to the supernatural habitus of faith,⁷ by the time of the writing of the *Summa theologiae*, the habitus itself merely makes the act of faith easier. It is instead a separate gift, the *donum scientiae*, that makes it possible to know what should be believed.⁸ That this moral knowledge stems from a divine gift rather than from any other source is essential for Aquinas, for it is a necessary condition for any act of belief to be called an act of faith in the proper sense of the term. Such an act is defined by the fact that it has as its object something God has said or testified for.⁹ It is by reference to the effect of his divine gifts (habitus or *donum scientiae*) that he can be said to testify.

7 Thomas Aquinas, *Super Sent.*, lib. 3 d. 23 q. 3 a. 2 co.

8 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II 9, 1, ad 2; II-II 9, 2, ad 1; II-II 9, 3, co.; II-II 9, 3, ad 3.

9 Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, 14, 1, co: "... haec quidem voluntas determinat intellectum ad aliquid quod neque per seipsum videtur, neque ad ea quae per se videntur, resolvi posse determinat, ex hoc quod dignum reputat illi esse adhaerendum propter aliquam rationem, qua bonum videtur ei illi rei adhaerere." *Super Sent.*, lib. 3 d. 23 q. 2 a. 2 qc. 1 co.: "Et sic etiam movetur ad credendum dictis Dei, inquantum nobis repromittitur, si crediderimus, praemium aeternae vitae: et hoc praemio movetur voluntas ad assentiendum his quae dicuntur, quamvis intellectus non moveatur per aliquid intellectum."

It appears then that, for Aquinas, the faithful need to know of the supernatural process that leads to their acts of belief. It is even what essentially differentiates them from heretics, since otherwise believer's faith would not be meritorious. Indeed, while heretics choose what they want to believe spontaneously, in accordance with their own individual desires, the faithful determines what she will believe by following God's prompting.¹⁰ It is because they do not follow this prompting, when it is presented to them, that heretics, who have enjoyed God's gifts but have chosen not to follow his guidance, are known as such.¹¹ The question is: how can God's prompting be recognized to have a divine source? By what kind of psychological phenomenon is God's testimony known? For the Dominican, it takes the form of an immediate, non-discursive apprehension of the object of faith as a *credendum*.¹² John Jenkins, who is perhaps the best commentator of Aquinas's doctrine of faith, contended that this apprehension did not only make the object of faith immediately appear as *credendum*: it also made it appear as divinely revealed, the object of God's testimony.¹³ As I showed previously,¹⁴ I believe the examination of Aquinas's text does not confirm this idea: the habitus of faith or the gift of science are said in many passages to make the object appear as *credendum* but there is no reference to the fact that its being the object of God's testimony would appear at the same time and in the same way.

There are, however, circumstances in which faith occurs when it is made manifest that God does testify in favor of something. In the *Summa theologiae*, there are two such cases:¹⁵ the first is the case of the faith of demons. The second is the case of manifest miracles supporting a given preaching. In both cases, even though some contribution of the will is required for faith to occur because the object of faith in question is not immediately known in itself (otherwise it would be known rather than believed to be true), this contribution is minimal and almost non-existent: the singular perception of demons and the evidential power of manifest miracles are so strong that the assents they cause force the intellect to assent to their object. Furthermore, the faith in question is not meritorious faith. Indeed, it proceeds not from a desire to believe in order to please God but from the mere conviction that the object of faith in question should be

10 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, 11, 1, co.; *Super Sent.*, lib. 3 d. 23 q. 3 a. 3 qc. 2 ad 1.; *Quodlibet* VI, q. 4 co.; *Quodlibet* VI, q. 4 co. ad 1.

11 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, 12, 1, co.

12 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, 9, 1, ad 1.

13 John Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 207.

14 See Nicolas Faucher, *La volonté de croire au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019), 132–138.

15 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, 5, 2, co.

believed, and this conviction is brought about by the mere examination of the available evidence for the truth of the object (that is, the evidence given by their superior intellectual faculties, in the case of demons, and the evidence given by the occurrence of the miracle, in the second case). Indeed, since God, by definition, always tells the truth, it is not a matter of virtue but of basic logic to deem true and believable whatever he testifies for.

These cases are remarkable because they make it very clear what kind of difficulty one finds oneself in when trying to establish the foundation of one's belief on divine testimony. If one makes it impossible or extraordinarily hard to differentiate virtuous belief from vicious or neutral belief, then it is impossible to hold the faithful responsible for their acts of faith, because they do not have the capacity to discern morally right belief from morally wrong belief and should thus be considered equally justified or equally unjustified in holding either. Conversely, if one makes it too easy and obvious to apprehend the unambiguous signs of God's favor, then one cannot account for the virtuous character of faith, nor for the fact that it depends on the will because of the insufficiency of natural human intellectual means. In other terms, for a belief to be considered morally right, the fact that it is epistemically right must not be too obvious, while not being completely inaccessible to the believer.

Contemporary interpretations such as John Jenkins's¹⁶ or Creighton Rosenthal's¹⁷ hold that there is something like a signature of God that is impressed upon the intuitions his gifts provide us with and that allows us to draw a clear-cut distinction between faithful belief relying solely on God and other, spontaneous beliefs. I disagree with this idea because, as I mentioned, it is both unsustained by the texts and would prevent the act of faith from being meritorious.

Rather, I think it preferable to say that, even though Aquinas does not explicitly say it, he provides enough elements for us to consider it possible to distinguish, by introspection and conjecture, virtuous belief from other beliefs. Indeed, it seems that an instinctive conviction regarding the credentity¹⁸ of some propo-

¹⁶ Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith*, 199.

¹⁷ Creighton Rosenthal, *Lessons from Aquinas: A Resolution of the Problem of Faith and Reason* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2015), 229 sqq.

¹⁸ The term "credentity" signifies a certain property of a given proposition: the fact that there are moral reasons to believe it rather than epistemic reasons. So, when a proposition has credentity, it means that you have epistemic reasons to think it is probably true or obviously true (for instance, an epistemic authority, like an expert, tells you it is true); when it has credentity, it means that you have moral reasons to think you ought to believe it (for instance, a moral authority, like a priest or a wise person, tells you you should believe it).

sition which occurs independently of its content and in a consistent manner is a unique enough phenomenon that it might be sharply distinguished from other beliefs one can link with personal desires and interests. Since such introspection is a means by which anyone possessing the divine gifts may determine what comes from them and what does not, it seems clear that it would lead to an acute rejection of other, concurrent beliefs in general and heretical beliefs in particular, especially because heretics, having enjoyed the divine gifts and their effects, choose to ignore the evidence they provide.

I believe this is why heretics can be compelled to denounce their beliefs by the use of force, and even killed, according to Aquinas, while the Dominican never recommends the use of force in converting non-believers who have not received these indications.¹⁹ As I made clear, the effect of grace is what allows one to know what one should believe. Accordingly, it is because of the sacraments received that one can be said to know what they should do (and punished appropriately if they don't do it);²⁰ and it is because they oppose the interior instinct given by grace, as much as the Church's preaching, that infidels can be so called.²¹ Only those who enjoy divine grace can be said to form right and wrong beliefs, because only they have any access to the relevant evidence. It seems to be in this respect that heretics differ from pagans and Jews:

Indeed, while the sin of infidelity consists in opposing faith, this can occur in two ways. Because either one opposes faith that has not yet been accepted, and such is the infidelity of Pagans or Gentiles. Or one opposes accepted Christian faith, either figuratively, and such is the infidelity of Jews; or in the very manifestation of the truth, and such is the infidelity of the heretic.²²

I take the “manifestation of the truth” to refer to whether the persons concerned enjoy the effects of grace or not. Indeed, it is clear that nothing precludes pagans and Jews in Aquinas's time from knowing the contents of revelation or the contents of the Church's preaching. They must therefore differ in that they cannot ground their beliefs in grace, which does not show them what they should believe. It is according to this difference that Aquinas determines whether the be-

¹⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, 11, 1, co.; II-I, 10, 8, co.

²⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, 10, 3, ad 3.

²¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, 10, 1, ad 1.

²² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, 10, 5, co: “Cum enim peccatum infidelitatis consistat in renitendo fidei, hoc potest contingere dupliciter. Quia aut renititur fidei nondum susceptae, et talis est infidelitas Paganorum sive gentilium. Aut renititur fidei Christianae susceptae, vel in figura, et sic est infidelitas Iudaeorum; vel in ipsa manifestatione veritatis, et sic est infidelitas haeticorum.”

liefs of these different groups should be punished: the more one knows, the graver it is to oppose faith. So the heretic's fault should be the heaviest and the pagan's the mildest.

Interestingly, these different groups' beliefs and practices are to be tolerated according to a different, more pragmatic logic: Judaic rites should be tolerated because they figuratively represent to Christians what they believe and thus have a measure of goodness. Pagan and heretical rites, conversely, should, as a rule, never be tolerated because they are neither useful nor truthful. Aquinas does not elaborate, but one can surmise that this is for opposite reasons: pagan rites, having nothing to do with Christian faith, cannot lead to the truth in any way; conversely, heretical rites, though they might be closest to the true faith than the other rites mentioned, are all the more dangerous because they represent neither a movement towards Christian faith, like Judaism, nor a movement that is indifferent to it, but a movement away from it. Since, as I believe, all these differences rest on whether the different individuals concerned have an introspective access to what they should believe, I think Aquinas's doctrine can be taken as a crucial step in the emergence of the link between introspection, supernaturally aided conscience, and the toleration of other beliefs.

3 Olivi: An Inner Moral Instinct

Olivi defends a similar view but has the edifice of faith rest on what he calls a natural, or even '*naturalissimus*,' instinct rather than a supernatural one. By this instinct, one is naturally convinced that there can be a supreme being, one loves this being and feels one has a duty to worship him.²³ The operation of this instinct seems to correspond to the fact that, according to Olivi, God, who is the end of faith, can be taken as such before his mere existence is an object of belief.²⁴ In other terms, God can be loved before one believes in him and it

²³ Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, vol. 3, ed. B. Jansen (Quaracchi: ex typogr. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1926), 544: "... cum [mens] audit vel per se concipit altitudinem summi entis summamque ejus justitiam et potestatem et bonitatem, quodam naturali instinctu timore tam reverentiae quam poenae concutitur et in ipsius cogitatu et auditu admirationis stupore repletur et quodam naturali amore ejus afficitur. Statim enim quodam naturalissimo instinctu ex sensu inferioritatis sentit se posse habere superius quem timere et revereri debeat, immo, acsi ipsum sentiret, mens cogitatu vel auditu sic afficitur, quantum est de se vi naturalis instinctus."

²⁴ Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones de incarnatione et redemptione, quaestiones de virtutibus*, ed. A. Emmen and E. Stadter (Quaracchi: ex typogr. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1981), 354: "... sufficit

is this love, accompanied by the desire to worship him, that is the motive of the act of faith by which his existence is posited. That it is our moral duty to love and worship God in such a way seems to be the object of an immediate moral apprehension that does not require any reasoning, nor does it leave any room for doubt.

One might ask how this is an act of faith if an act of faith is defined by the fact that it relies on God's testimony. How can such a moral apprehension be taken to be God's testimony if it is the product of a natural instinct and not of grace? For Olivi, the answer is in the notion of *relucentia*, or shining. In the objects of faith²⁵ as well as in his own concept,²⁶ God is said to shine as a principle and ultimate end for us. Olivi appears to say that, by this shining, God's goodness, but not his truth, appears immediately to us. This explains why it is constitutive of God's testimony: something of God is made manifest to us and directs our belief, not by making the truths of faith evident to us but by making it clear that it is good to believe them in order to worship God.

While it is not hard to see how our duty to worship God and thus to believe appears naturally to us, it is more difficult to understand how *relucentia* can make us apprehend the credentia of other objects of faith. Grasping the concept of God, taken as a supreme being, perfectly just, good, and other such characteristics can easily appear as a universal trigger for a desire to reach him, obtain eternal life and other such aims that appear immediately desirable and elevated. But many objects of faith are not apprehended in such a way: that God is three and one, to an uncultivated person, does not appear to be linked in any way to the basic concept of God. It seems to be believed because it has been revealed rather than because some natural instinct could drive us to believe it. However, Olivi also employs the concept of *relucentia* as regards any object of faith. The status of this *relucentia* is unclear: it might be the result of grace, of a supernatural instinct, but Olivi is distinguished by the peculiar absence of the traditional vocabulary used by medieval authors to speak of divine gifts and thus it is difficult to have any definitive opinion on this matter. Nonetheless, Olivi's *relucentia*

quod prius apprehendat in aliquo objecto rationem finis vel principalitatis solum cogitando quid est quod dicitur per nomen; non autem oportet quod prius hoc credat aut iudicet ita esse."

25 Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones de incarnatione et redemptione, quaestiones de virtutibus*, 354: "Veritas enim increata relucet in eis majestative et principative et superexcessive; reliquae vero relucet ibi ut illi cohaerentes et subordinatae et in ipsam tamquam in ultimum finem ducentes. Ipsa etiam universaliter et fundamentaliter relucet ubique in omnibus veritatibus fidei et in omnibus testimoniis ejus; quod non est sic dare de aliis."

26 Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones de incarnatione et redemptione, quaestiones de virtutibus*, 354: "... credimus illa propter Deum testificantem illa et in illis quodammodo relucentem."

seems to be the functional equivalent of infused faith in Bonaventure and infused faith and the gift of science in Aquinas, the difference being that it is sometimes a clearly natural phenomenon and sometimes may or may not be supernatural.

In either the case of believing in God or the case of believing the other objects of faith, Olivi is remarkably ambiguous on what we can apprehend, by introspection, of our own beliefs and their origins. He clearly affirms that, when we have been educated to believe in the Catholic truths, this education is the trigger of our instinct, and it thus appears as if our belief had resulted from our mere education.²⁷ But what proceeds from this education is without epistemic or moral value.²⁸ Indeed, since human beings are so susceptible to social influences, they could believe anything because of them.²⁹

Olivi's doctrine thus displays a novel blending of the natural and the supernatural. That by which we know what to believe seems to have as its origin a mix of both. More importantly, in Aquinas the faithful believe because of the combined effect of social factors in the form of preaching, which tells us what we should believe, and supernatural factors, which tell us that we should believe it. By contrast, it is clear that, in Olivi, the role of social processes is not limited

27 Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones de incarnatione et redemptione, quaestiones de virtutibus*, 357, 7–13: “Quando est recta, recte disponitur mens ad veram fidem, Deo interius cooperante et tandem veram fidem dante, licet hominibus videatur quod quasi totum sit a se ipsis et ab auxilio consuetudinis praefatae. Quando autem illa est prava, sicut utique est inter infideles, tunc mentes, quas indidit, praecipitat in infidelitatem; cujus quidem magnum fundamentum in originali corruptione consistit.”

28 Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones de incarnatione et redemptione, quaestiones de virtutibus*, 355: “... licet consuetudo seu assuefactio seu continua experientia fidei parentum et domesticorum aut concivium suorum habeat vim vehementer inductivam ad fidem veram vel erroneam, [nihilominus si] huic consuetudini principaliter innitantur, non aliter divinitus moti, nisi sola affectione humana et sola aestimatione credulitatis parentum et concivium suorum, absque divina aestimatione veritatis divinae a parentibus creditae et sibi per eos propositae, non habent fidem catholicam et virtuosam et divini cultus fundativam.”

29 Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones de incarnatione et redemptione, quaestiones de virtutibus*, 356: “Sciendum autem quod consuetudo nutritionis ab infantia deducta multiplici ex causa habet maximam vim inducendi ad fidem, et praecipue quando ab infantia occurrit ut in multis populis et in sollemnibus personis et ab antiquo famose deducta. Primo quidem, quia tota infantilis dispositio est naturaliter susceptibilis et subjecta et disciplinabilis a suis nutritoribus; est enim aetas multum timorata et mobilis, sicut cera tenella. – Secundo, quia naturalis amor parentum et nutritorum et multa aestimatio, tam ipsorum quam quorumcumque superiorum, cito ac fortiter imprimitur eis, et sic excrescit in eis. – Tertio, quia nesciunt concipere nisi quod audiunt, et ideo est aetas facile credula; et praecipue quia, sicut sunt simplices et sine dolo, sic de aliis aestimant. – Quarto, quia fama antiquitatis et multitudinis et magnae auctoritatis fortiter imprimitur omnibus, sed praecipue simplicioribus.”

to transmitting a propositional content: they also make us believe in its truth, in such a way that we can hardly distinguish such ordinary beliefs from truly virtuous ones.

4 Scotus: The Impossibility to Distinguish Right from Wrong

Olivi can be considered as a bridge between Aquinas and Scotus. The doubt Olivi very clearly expresses as to our capacity to discern proper, virtuous belief from belief produced by mere social processes that are epistemically and morally fallible can be found in Scotus as well, in a radicalized version. In the Subtle Doctor's view, there is no more ambiguity: it is necessary that introspection yield no knowledge at all regarding the origins of our faith. Otherwise, it could not be faith anymore: if we knew God directs our belief, we would know it to be true and therefore know its object to be true.³⁰ Moreover, Scotus systematically excludes the possibility that any difference might be made between ordinary beliefs and beliefs that proceed from the supernatural virtue of faith by human beings. For Scotus, education is both a necessary and sufficient factor for perfectly firm, faithful belief: a Jew that has never been baptized but has been educated among Christians will believe exactly like them,³¹ and no one has ever seen someone believe that the dead will be resurrected who has never been taught

30 John Duns Scotus, *Quodlibet*, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 26, ed. L. Wadding (Paris: Vivès, 1895), *Quodlibet* XIV, 12: "... non percipio me inclinari in actum per fidem infusam, sive secundum illam elicere actum; sed tantum percipio me assentire secundum fidem acquisitam, vel ejus principium, scilicet testimonium, cui credo, quia si perciperem me habere actum secundum fidem infusam, et cum hoc scirem quod secundum fidem infusam non potest haberi actus nisi determinate verus, perciperem quod actus meus non posset esse falsus, quia ex hoc sequitur quod perciperem quod objectum actus non posset esse falsum, et tunc scirem illud, id est, infallibiliter cognoscerem illud esse verum, quod nullus experitur in se, ut credo, quantumcumque aliquis habeat utramque fidem et secundum utramque assentiat."

31 John Duns Scotus, *Lectura*, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 21, ed. B. Hechich, B. Huculak, J. Percan, S. Ruiz de Loizaga, and C. Saco Alarcón (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 2004), I. III, d. 23, 102–103: "... si unus puer iudaeus nutriretur inter nos, numquam baptizatus et more nostro divino disciplinatus, ipse fide acquisita ex auditu crederet et adhaereret omnibus quibus nos credimus, sicut etiam ego fide acquisita ex auditu aliorum (scilicet parentum, quorum veritati credo) credo multa tempora transivisse et mundum non incepisse mecum, et credo Romam esse quam numquam vidi, ex relatu fide dignorum; sic revelatis in Scriptura – per fidem acquisitam ex auditu – firmiter adhaereo, credendo Ecclesiae approbanti veritatem illorum auctorum."

that they should believe it.³² However, this Jew will never hold a virtuous belief, since he does not have infused faith (given by baptism). Indeed, infused faith is still necessary for meritorious acts of faith. However, it can be actualized only when faith acquired by education is actualized, and only the latter actualization is interiorly knowable, i.e., then the believer knows that she believes but she does not know that she believes rightly since she cannot know whether she has infused faith.

This, of course, leaves open the question how one may avoid error. Unfortunately, Scotus does not provide any answer. Since God's testimony is inaccessible to us, the only vehicle of truth we can trust is the Church's testimony. There are a great many reasons to believe that the Church is probably right in preaching the Catholic faith and that it is thus probable that we have a duty to believe in it, which would constitute the moral justification of our voluntary act of faith. But God's grace, for Aquinas, or Olivi's instinct are like compasses we can use to discern whether this or that specific object should be believed. Without such a compass, even if we are justified in believing that the Church is truthful, how can we know the Church said this or that? How can the simple orientate themselves when their superiors may be wrong and are often in disagreement with one another?

To this question, Scotus provides no answer, and yet he is adamant in rejecting any other belief. He is well-known as a *vituperous denunciator* of other religions, especially Islam,³³ and an advocate of the forced conversion of Jews.³⁴ It may be hypothesized that this tendency stems from the fact that he maintains both that we have no inner resource that could guide us to the truth and that we must nonetheless believe firmly in a set of propositions. In such a situation,

32 John Duns Scotus, *Lectura*. I. III, d. 23, 114: "... si totus assensus sit ab ipso habitu fidei, tunc positus omnibus quae concurrunt ad actum credendi in esse primo, sequitur necessario actus credendi; sed ponatur aliquis baptizatus nunc, et occurrant sibi phantasmata istorum terminorum simplicium 'mortui' et 'resurrectionis', ex quo ponitur potentia habituata et necessario inclinata ex objecto praesentato in phantasmate, sequitur necessario actus quo iste assentiret huic complexo 'mortui resurgent', – quod falsum est: numquam enim, omnibus istis positus, plus assentiret quam ante, nisi prius esset edoctus de hoc articulo quod talis articulus est credendus; igitur videtur quod fides acquisita sufficit quae acquiritur ex auditu, nec experitur aliquis aliam cum tali assensu."

33 Cf. John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio, prologus*, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 1, ed. C. Balić, M. Bodewig, S. Bušelić, P. Čapkun-Delić, I. Jurić, I. Montalverne, S. Nanni, B. Pergamo, F. Prezioso, I. Reinhold, and O. Schäfer (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950), p. 2, q. u., 71–74.

34 Cf. Sylvain Piron and Elsa Marmursztejn, "Duns Scot et la politique. Pouvoir du prince et conversion des juifs," in *Duns Scot à Paris, 1302–2002*, ed. O. Boulnois, E. Karger, J.-L. Solère, and G. Sondag (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 21–62.

since we are unable to trust ourselves, the institution in charge of protecting our beliefs must use any means necessary to accomplish this difficult and paradoxical mission.

5 Conclusion

In the rapid overview I attempted to outline, I wanted to sketch a historical movement that, all along the thirteenth century, goes from setting down the basic elements of the psychology and theology of faith up until Bonaventure, to asking the question what the faithful know of this process and highlighting the fundamental theological and philosophical questions posed by the possibility of this knowledge in Aquinas. Then, I endeavored to suggest that, at the end of the thirteenth century, the idea that it is impossible or almost impossible to have any certain knowledge of this process seems to be on the rise, as exemplified by Olivi's and Scotus's doctrines.

The effect of this change is rather counterintuitive. Aquinas defends what seems to be a nuanced stance towards other beliefs, depending on how much knowledge one has of what should be believed. Scotus, conversely, is far from saying that not knowing this with certainty excuses from sin and punishment in proportion to this ignorance. Rather, he seems to believe that it warrants a radical, institutional rejection and harsh treatment of other beliefs that can be conjectured to be made necessary precisely because of our lack of individual capacity for intellectual and moral orientation.

Let me finish by saying that there might be something universal in this dual reaction: when one's conceptual *apparatus* allows for a complex view of human reality and the foundation of morality, it stands to reason that one may allow for differentiated reactions to this reality as well as different moral attitudes; conversely, when all human reality is reduced to a single situation shared by all men, and this situation consists in being held to an extremely demanding duty that individuals have no hope of accomplishing without harsh outside enforcement, it is not surprising that this gives rise to a single-minded, unrelenting determination to defend this enforcement.

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Susan Gottlöber

Chapter 8

Thinking the Foundations of Toleration: Nicolas of Cusa on Individuation, Alterity, and Diversity in Human Customs

Post haec ad memoriam revocemus ea, quae supra dixi de intentione, scilicet quomodo creatura est intentio conditoris; et consideramus intentionem esse verissimam quidditatem eius.¹

Introduction: Some Contextual Remarks

Modern and contemporary arguments regarding toleration, acceptance, or the respect of difference, when faced with different types of otherness are often built on, either in an explicit or implicit manner, two key presumptions: an epistemological skepticism, and/or, as a further argument, a respect for our human individuality and thus plurality, leading to moral arguments for personal autonomy, freedom of conscience, freedom of religions, a plurality of human values, etc. In democratic societies today this is often reflected in our rights-based approach.²

There is, furthermore, the general perception that toleration only gained “traction as a political concept as a pragmatic response to the wars of religion ravaging Europe and making its way from here as the ‘norm’ when dealing

1 “After this, let us recall to memory those things which I said above about intention, namely, how a creature is the intention of its creator; and we consider the intention to be its truest thisness/essence.” Nikolaus von Kues (hereafter Nicolas of Cusa), *De beryllo*, in *Philosophisch-Theologische Schriften*, ed. Leo Gabriel, trans. Dietlind and Wilhelm Dupré, vol. 3 (Vienna: Herder, 1967), cap. XXXI, 1–91, at 64.

2 One may only think of Hannah Arendt’s famous statement in the *Human Condition* for pluralism: “men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world.” Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, intr. Margaret Canovan (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 7. In a similar manner, leading pluralists of the twentieth century such as Isaiah Berlin have argued for a value pluralism from an ethical as well as a political perspective. See Isaiah Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy (London: Chatto & Windus; Pimlico, 2000), 11ff. Without doubt, such an argument is distinctly modern and owes a lot, not only to the liberal tradition, but also to the experience of the devastating consequences of twentieth-century totalitarianism.

with difference.”³ It was only following from here that it came to be established as a personal and social virtue ideal from the Enlightenment onwards.⁴

Yet, scholarship has shown, on the other hand, that we can trace the roots of toleration as a concept (if not necessarily our contemporary understanding of it) all the way back to antiquity,⁵ with the main focus shifting to the question of religious difference as early as Tertullian and St. Cyprian.⁶ Within the Christian context, the focus on religious ‘otherness’ would remain largely the same up until the early nineteenth century where thinkers like John Stuart Mill saw a shift both towards expanding the object of toleration beyond religion as well as including arguments from and for individual and cultural plurality.⁷ We still recognize such arguments today but they raise, at the same time, the question if and how far we can trace some of these specific roots of the foundation of toleration also back to the Middle Ages.

Similar questions resurface repeatedly also in Cusanus scholarship. As the editors of *Nicolas of Cusa and the Making of the Early Modern World* point out, “Cusanus’s influence on modernity [and I would add the question if and how far he was a modern thinker] remains a hotly debated topic.”⁸ This is equally

3 Michael W. Dunne and Susan Gottlöber, “Introduction,” in *Tolerance and Concepts of Otherness in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Michael W. Dunne and Susan Gottlöber (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022), xi–xxiv, at x.

4 Henry Kamen, *The Rise of Toleration* (London: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 7; Siegfried Wollgast, “Christliche Religion und Toleranz – gestern und heute,” *Sitzungsberichte der Leibnizsozietät* 84 (2006): 21–68; Cary J. Nederman, *Worlds of Difference: European Discourses of Toleration, c. 1100–c. 1550* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 2000), 1; Heinrich Bornkamm, “Toleranz,” in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Kurt Gallig, vol. 4 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), cols. 933–946.

5 Cf., for example, Rainer Forst, “Toleration,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2017 edition, ed. Edward N. Zalta, available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/toleration/>; for his more extended reflections see also the relevant passages in *Toleranz im Konflikt. Geschichte, Gehalt und Gegenwart eines umstrittenen Begriffs* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003). See István Bejczy, “Tolerantia: A Medieval Concept,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58 (1997): 65–84; Nederman, *Worlds of Difference*; John Christian Laursen and Cary J. Nederman, *Beyond the Persecuting Society: Religious Toleration before the Enlightenment* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998); Alexander Patschovsky and Harald Zimmermann, eds., *Toleranz im Mittelalter* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1998).

6 Cf. Forst, “Toleration”; Forst, *Toleranz im Konflikt*, esp. 53–180. Tertullian, *De Christiana religione* 4, I, 4. Cyprianus, *Ad demetrianum apologeticus*, 19 or *De bono lapsis*, 2.

7 See Forst, “Toleration”; John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, ed. Gertrude Himmelfarb (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974); Christina Sauter, *Der junge Wilhelm von Humboldt, Georg Forster und ihre Auffassung von “Toleranz”* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986).

8 Simon J. G. Burton, Joshua Hollmann, and Eric Parker, eds., *Nicholas of Cusa and the Making of the Early Modern World* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 1.

true regarding his positions on toleration and related topics:⁹ his contributions to the thinking of toleration, a positive evaluation of individuality, difference, and (religious) pluralism have been an object of contestation, often embedded in the above mentioned larger debates around Cusa's relationship to modernity.¹⁰ However, we will leave these debates aside insofar as the question if and how far Cusa is a modern thinker and precursor of modern ideas such as, e.g., regarding epistemology or individualism, and if and where we see breaks or continuities is not our main concern. Rather, keeping in mind the argument that runs from individuation to unique individuality to evaluating human plurality as positive, to how this is used as an argument for toleration – which is, in very general terms, the argument we see employed in liberal theories up to thinkers like Arendt – we will focus on establishing Cusa's positions on individuality and human plurality, and, following from that, investigate if and how these relate to his own arguments on toleration regarding religious otherness.

Despite the significant amount of scholarship published on the subject of Cusanus and (inter)religious toleration, there is good reason to return to this topic once more. A number of arguments that have been made for Cusa being a representative of the use of toleration in interreligious dialogue refer to his (supposed) positive evaluation of difference which then is used as a basis in addition to the *religio in rituum varietate* and the *docta ignorantia*. Likewise, those skeptical of these interpretations focus normally not only on his lack of toleration regarding religious otherness (Islam and Judaism in particular) but also

9 See for the different positions, e.g., Karl Jaspers, *Nikolus Cusanus* (Munich: Pieper, 1964); Gerhard Krieger, "Cusanus und die Idee der Toleranz," in *Nicolaus Cusanus: Ein bewundernswerter historischer Brennpunkt*, ed. Klaus Reinhardt, Harald Schwaetzer, and Oleg Dushin (Regensburg: Roderer-Verlag, 2008), 97–119; Walter Andreas Euler, "Dialogue and Toleration in Cusa," in Dunne and Gottlöber, *Tolerance and Concepts of Otherness in Medieval Philosophy*, 303–314; Scott F. Aikin and Aleksander Jason, "Nicholas of Cusa's 'De pace fidei' and the Meta-Exclusivism of Religious Pluralism," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 74 (2013): 219–235; Brigitte Kuhn-Emmerich, *Die Toleranz bei Nikolaus von Cues: Das Ergebnis einer religiösen Denkweise*, PhD diss. (Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, 1968). A large number of additional publications focus specifically on Cusa's engagement with Islam and his approach to dialogue, however, that is not our main focus here.

10 In their introduction to the recent edited collection *Nicholas of Cusa and the Making of the Early Modern World*, Burton, Hollmann, and Parker give an excellent extensive account of the different "waves" in Cusa scholarship regarding modernity: accelerated modernity (Cusa as the first modern philosopher), accidental modernity, and alternative modernity. Especially in the early to mid-twentieth century we see a very favourable assessment of Cusa on the questions of a positive evaluation of individuality and difference with a move to a more differentiated view or even rejecting these interpretations in the scholarship over the last decades. Cf. Burton, Hollmann, and Parker, *Nicholas of Cusa*, 1–11.

on the fact that actually Cusa does not have a positive interpretation of either individuality or human plurality.

In both the past and current debates on the subject matter, Cusa is almost exclusively discussed within the context of religion and interreligious dialogue/tolerance, although the question of the *alteritas* (especially in relation to oneness) of the world is still repeatedly referred to. In order to counter the criticism of anachronism when looking at Cusa and toleration I have argued previously that I see a promising approach in addressing this question anew by starting with a descriptive concept of toleration as a *tertium comparationis*. Here I am following Rainer Forst, one of the leading contemporary thinkers on toleration, who himself follows Rawls in distinguishing between *different conceptions* (i.e., how toleration plays out historically) and *one concept*. Forst develops the idea that we can indeed establish “a core meaning, and this core is the *concept* of toleration.”¹¹ Basing his analysis mainly on King, Forst argues rightly that in order to identify toleration at all we need to identify three core components: (1) the objection component (without which there would be no need for toleration), (2) the acceptance component (“which specifies that the tolerated convictions and practices are condemned as false or bad, yet not so false or bad that other, positive reasons do not speak for tolerating them,”¹² and (3) the rejection component which specifies the limits of toleration – it is this concept of toleration that stands in the background of my analysis. In the same paper I have contended further, building on Kuçuradi’s argument, that in order to understand any argument for or against toleration we need to understand the epistemological, axiological, and ontological underpinnings of the arguments used for objection, acceptance, and rejection.¹³

While these considerations stand also in the background of our current investigation I will, in the following paper, take a closer look at *one* of the mentioned underpinnings, namely, the ontological evaluation of individuality and difference in the thought of Nicholas of Cusa and investigate its use (or lack

11 Rainer Forst, *Toleration in Conflict: Past and Presence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 17, emphasis in original. Cf. Susan Gottlöber, “How Tolerable Is Cusa’s Tolerance? Revisiting Cusa’s Encounter with Islam,” *Entangled Religions* 8 (2019): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.13154/er.8.2019.8435>.

12 Forst, *Toleration in Conflict*, 20. I have developed this idea of using the concept of toleration as *tertium comparationis* in greater detail in Gottlöber, “How Tolerable Is Cusa’s Tolerance?” and will therefore refrain from doing so here.

13 Gottlöber, “How Tolerable Is Cusa’s Tolerance?,” 13. I am building my argument on Kuçuradi’s position as developed in Ioanna Kuçuradi, “On Tolerance and the Limits of Toleration,” *Digenes* 44:176 (1996): 163–174, at 168f.

thereof) in Cusa's argument concerning toleration and plurality of human customs, including religious difference. Or to phrase it differently: our investigation is concerned with Cusa's concept of individuation and how much it forms the basis of his evaluation of the plurality of different worldly expressions of human existence such as customs and religious rites.¹⁴

Having established these foundations, we can then take the next step and draw initial conclusions regarding the philosophical foundations for toleration or maybe even respect for otherness in Cusa's thought. If I am correct in that we can identify an ontological foundation for a positive evaluation of the uniqueness of the individual and its alterity (which is part of its essential being), then we can investigate if Cusa himself used it for his own argumentation with regard to religious toleration – or not.

We will approach this topic in three steps: firstly, we will outline Cusa's understanding of individuation (which attracted the attention of a number of thinkers who rediscovered Cusa in the early twentieth century), especially as developed in his perspective on the *principium discernibilum individuationis* and how it relates to his views on the uniqueness of individuality. Secondly, we will investigate the consequences for Cusa's understanding of the diversity of customs and thus human plurality in the cultural and religious sense. Thirdly and finally, we will reflect back on what this means for toleration or respect of otherness for Cusa himself and conclude if, independently of Cusa's own conclusions, we *could* regard Cusa's insights as founding principles for thinking about toleration. This last point would mean to potentially think with Cusa beyond Cusa: I will argue that Cusa did not follow the logical consequences of his thought with regard to the question of interreligious toleration, but that it would be nevertheless unwise to dismiss his approach entirely.

1 From Individuation to Unique Individuality

1.1 Some Remarks on the History of this Interpretation

It was probably the authority of the great Renaissance-scholar Jacob Burckhardt who was responsible for starting the trend in Renaissance scholarship regarding

¹⁴ The latter forming, as Riedenauer rightly points out, the natural dimension of the different religious rites. See Markus Riedenauer, "Religiöse und kulturelle Pluralität als Konfliktursache bei Nikolaus von Kues," in *Conflict and Reconciliation: Perspectives on Nicholas of Cusa*, ed. Inigo Bocken (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 131–159, at 143.

the emergence of the *uomo singulare* in the Renaissance, and making individualism the hallmark of this period.¹⁵ It fitted well, especially in the German context, with the emerging celebration of individuality, creativity, etc., that we see unfolding in the Romantic period in Germany (including the emergence of life philosophy) and thus an idea that was taken up in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by philosophers like Dilthey, Buber, or Cassirer, the latter dedicating two full chapters to Cusa in his work *Individuum und Komos in der Philosophie der Renaissance*.¹⁶ Dilthey and Cassirer themselves in turn influenced a number of generations of German thinkers. It reached its height in the early twentieth century and led the philosopher Martin Buber, who, influenced by Dilthey interpreted Cusa as a precursor to modern individualism, to state the following in his dissertation from 1904:

If I, out of the fullness of material, focused on those two thinkers [Cusa and Böhme] then it happened because it is important to establish them – against dominating interpretations – as two of the founders of the newer metaphysical individualism as faithful philosophical representatives of that epoch whose desire for personality Wilhelm Dilthey has described so convincingly. They are two of the first thinkers, who have developed the transcendental foundation of that personal ethics which has found its most harmonic ideal form in Schleiermacher and its most enchanting expression in literature with Emerson.¹⁷

15 Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien. Ein Versuch* (Basel: Schweighauser, 1860), esp. part 2 on “Entwicklung des Individuums,” 131–170: “Der Mensch wird geistiges Individuum und erkennt sich als solches,” 131.

16 Ernst Cassirer, *Individuum und Komos in der Philosophie der Renaissance*. Cassirer very much concurred with Burckhardt’s starting point from his 1860 magnum opus that the problem of individuality was a major concern for the Renaissance, however, unlike Burckhardt, Cassirer, in the spirit of his own philosophy of culture, wanted to show the continuity of Cusa’s thinking with the Middle Ages rather than its break with it. For an excellent overall assessment of Cassirer’s position on Cusa, see also Michael Edward Moore, “Ernst Cassirer and Renaissance Cultural Studies: The Figure of Nicholas of Cusa,” in Burton, Hollmann, and Parker, *Nicholas of Cusa*, 485–506.

17 “Wenn ich hier aus der Fülle des Stoffes gerade diese zwei Gestalten herausgegriffen habe, so geschah dies zunächst deshalb, weil es galt, sie im Gegensatz zu der landläufigen Auffassung als zwei der Begründer des neueren metaphysischen Individualismus zu erweisen, als treue philosophische Vertreter der Epoche, deren Drang nach Persönlichkeit Wilhelm Dilthey (Arch.f.Gesch.d.Ph.IV) so überzeugend geschildert hat, und als zwei der ersten von den Denkern, welche die transscendentale Grundlegung jener Personalitäts-Ethik geschaffen haben, die ihre harmonischeste ideelle Gestaltung bei Schleiermacher, ihren hinreissendsten literarischen Ausdruck bei Emerson gefunden hat.” Martin Buber, “Beiträge zur Geschichte des Individuationsproblems. Nicolaus von Cues und Jakob Böhme,” in *Mythos und Mystik: Frühe religionswissenschaftliche Schriften. Martin Buber Werkausgabe*, vol. 2.1, ed. David Groiser (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2013), 75–101, at 75. There exist two copies of Buber’s dissertation in the Buber archive which are both preserved in the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem

In the scholarship that followed, these rather one-sided interpretations were deemed to be outdated for several reasons, such as, e.g., the strong medieval foundation in Cusa's thinking which contradicts interpretations that see in Cusa a precursor of modern individualism (even though Buber, for example, clearly acknowledges those foundations). Hubert Benz's perspective may count as such an example, where he criticizes all subject-orientated interpretations for overlooking the finitude of the human mind its dependence on the divine.¹⁸

However, while there are good reasons to concur with those positions that deny the claim that Cusa is to be considered a founder of a "metaphysical individualism," Cusa's position on individuation and, consequently, the value of the individual, remains nevertheless significant, as we will show below.

1.2 Cusa's Concept of Individuation

While both the overall role of individuation and the individual in Cusa's work and Cusa's role in the historical development of the idea may remain a topic of debate,¹⁹ there is, to my mind, a strong case to be made for its relevance in his thought on alterity. His philosophical approach regarding individuation is a curious syncretic mixture of Neoplatonic ideas, the use of Aristotelian/scholas-

with the following shelfmarks: ARC. Ms. Var. 35000102 as a handwritten copy, and ARC. Ms. Var. 35000102a. The page number of the quotation here is p. 1f.

18 Cf. Hubert Benz, *Individualität und Subjektivität. Interpretationstendenzen in der Cusanus-Forschung und das Selbstverständnis des Nikolaus von Kues*. Buchreihe der Cusanus-Gesellschaft 13 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1999).

19 Heyde lists Cusa as one of the thinkers who used the idea of the individual difference of singular things before Leibniz coined the original formula; he refers to *De docta ignorantia*, II. Cf. Pii J. E. Heyde, "Indiscernibilia," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer, vol. 4 (Basel: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), cols. 283–286. On the development of the concept of individuation and related ideas such as individual or individuality, see also Hummel who for example claimed in 1952 that Cusa was the first thinker who consciously thought the principle of individuation through. Cf. Charles Hummel, *Nicolaus Cusanus. Das Individuationsprinzip in seiner Philosophie* (Bern and Stuttgart: Paul Haupt, 1952), 5. More recently, Regine Kather has argued that "Cusa was the first philosopher whose cosmology and anthropology are explicitly based on the idea of individuality." Regine Kather, "Human Identity and Its Relation to Finite and Infinite Being," in *Nicholas of Cusa on the Self and Self-Consciousness*, ed. Walter A. Euler, Ylva Gustavson, and Iris Wikström (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 2010), 91. Likewise, Hoff emphasizes that "Cusa's emphasis on the original indeterminacy of created hierarchies goes along with an unprecedented appreciation of the singularity (*singularitas*) of every creature." Johannes Hoff, *The Analogical Turn: Rethinking Modernity with Nicholas of Cusa* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), 159.

tic terminology, numerology, Scotus, and mysticism.²⁰ It can be pieced together from a number of individual writings, first and foremost *De coniecturis* (1441), *De ludo globi* (1462/63), and *De venatione sapientiae* (1462), and finds its height in *De beryllo* (1458), where he argues not only for the uniqueness of each individual being but also – as we have seen in the quote at the very beginning – that that uniqueness is intended by the Creator and thus something that is to be cherished. We will look at each of those aspects (individuation, uniqueness, and positive evaluation) in turn, with a special focus on participation with regard to the first aspect.

The *principium indiscernibilum*, and with it the emphasis of the individual as unique, appears stronger in the above-listed middle and especially later works of the Cardinal.²¹ Cusa is interested in both features that Gracia identifies as part of the question: the process by which an individual acquires the feature(s) that make it what it is and the explicit feature(s) that render it as such.²² Of course, Cusa does not have an affirmation of difference as *absolute* difference, i.e., the difference that we see in creation is not elementary. This means that the individual is not thought to be autonomous but rather stands in a number of relationships: it is grounded in and directs itself towards the one/God/the Creator, is, as a finite being, embedded in the infinite, shares its essence with other individuals of the same species, etc. Once again, therefore, he has to find a way to unify opposites – one of the reoccurring problems in his writings. While God himself, of course, is before all difference (*est enim ante differentiam omnem*),²³ all that is, lives, and thinks receives the non-other in different ways (*varia receptio*)²⁴ – sameness can only be achieved in the Absolute but no finite being by definition can be absolute.

20 On the role of Scotus, Johannes Assenmacher remarks as early as 1926 that Scotus's teaching on the principle of individuation (i.e., the concept of *haecceitas*) seems to be an important presupposition of Cusa's view on the nature of the individual. Cf. Johannes Assmacher, *Geschichte des Individuationsprinzips in der Scholastik* (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1926), 87. We will leave the influence of different thinkers on Cusa's concept of individuation to be discussed on another occasion.

21 See on the importance of his topic in Cusa's later philosophical and theological thought also Gerda von Bredow, "Der Gedanke der singularitas in der Altersphilosophie des Nikolaus von Kues," in *Im Gespräch mit Nikolaus von Kues. Gesammelte Aufsätze 1948–1993*, ed. Hermann Schnarr. Münster: Aschendorff, 1995, 31–40.

22 Cf. Jorge J. E. Gracia, *Introduction to the Problem of Individuation in the Early Middle Ages* (Munich and Vienna: Philosophia Verlag, 1984), 19.

23 Nicolas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae*, in *Philosophisch-Theologische Schriften*, ed. Leo Gabriel, trans. Dietlind and Wilhelm Dupré, vol. 1 (Vienna: Herder, 1964), 1–189, cap. XIII, 58.

24 Nicolas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae*, cap. XVI, 74–76.

Thus, individuation must be based in a principle that unites particularity and universality, unity and alterity. In *De coniecturis* Cusa confirms that this principle is participation, as difference in the created world is, above all, a difference in participation. He addresses the difference of individuals and how they participate in the species in different ways (*participare [autem] speciem haec individua varie scimus*) especially in Chapter 8 of Part 2 of *De coniecturis*: using the examples of seeds (standing also for potentiality and the feminine) and trees (standing for actuality and the masculine), he illustrates how some individuals participate in the species more in the seed and thus in potentiality and some more in the tree and thus in actuality.²⁵ Leaving a number of statements aside (some of which would be, of course, problematic for the contemporary reader) such as his reflections on perfection or that, while both female and male are needed to further the species, the one who participates more in the male is to be regarded as the more noble (*leo masculus nobilior quam leonissa et semen leoninum*),²⁶ what is important for us is the following: not only is it necessary that the masculine and feminine are different but also that there is no masculine individual that could not be more masculine and in which the feminine is not absorbed to some degree,²⁷ and the other way around.

This idea is then again picked up later in *De venatione sapientiae*, especially in Chapter 23. Cusa repeats here that all beings are the same in that they all participate, but different in the mode and grade of participation.²⁸ Most importantly of all: the individual things (*singula*) are not replicable (*implurificabilia*) – they are unique.²⁹ A little further on he strengthens this point by explicitly connecting God, world, species, and individuals in their uniqueness in a hierarchy of singularities: “Unde sicut singularissimus Deus est maxime implurificabilis ita post mundi singularitas maxime implurificabilis et deinde specierum post individuum quorum nullum plurificabile.”³⁰

25 Nicolas of Cusa, *De coniecturis*, in *Philosophisch-Theologische Schriften*, ed. Leo Gabriel, trans. Dietlind and Wilhelm Dupré, vol. 2 (Vienna: Herder, 1966), 1–209, part II, cap. VIII, 124–128.

26 Nicolas of Cusa, *De coniecturis*, II, cap. VIII, 126.

27 An interesting point with regard to contemporary gender debates.

28 Nicolas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae*, cap. XXIII, 110: “Omnia igitur inter se inaequalia aequalitatem quasi cuius libet essendi formam participant et in hoc aequalia sunt et quia illam inaequaliter participant inaequalia sunt.”

29 Nicolas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae*, cap. XXII, 102.

30 “Thus, as the most singular God is the most non-multipliable, so after this the singularity of the world is the most non-multipliable and then after this the species of the individual is that which is not multipliable.” Nicolas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae*, cap. XXII, 104.

Despite the emphasis Cusa places on uniqueness, the unity of world, species, and individuals remains guaranteed: referring to Dionysius Cusa states that the difference concerns only that which is added to the individual to make it in a particular way (i.e., the accidents), while the singularity (*singularitas*) remains incorruptible and the same.³¹

So far, however, while Cusa does emphasize the uniqueness of individual existence, he remains largely descriptive. Yet, we find passages, where this individuality, whose reason for being is being explained by the *principium individuationis*,³² is clearly regarded as something positive.

1.3 The Evaluation of the Uniqueness of the Individual as Positive

In order to evaluate if those thinkers who interpret Cusa as a thinker who values the uniqueness of the individual in a positive manner were correct, we first turn to *De beryllo* from 1458. Here Cusa states several times that each individual creature is the intention of the Creator: *creatura est intentio conditoris*.³³ The divine intellect, as Cusa states, shines forth in every specific form in the same way as a single infinite-magnitude appears in different finite magnitudes (so not in the same way as an original is reflected in different mirrors). However, because each creature is willed by the Creator, in order to reflect this will, it wills also to be itself: every individual cherishes its specific form as it is embodied in its *quidditas*, takes care not to lose it, and guards it as something most desired by it.³⁴ This sentiment is also reflected later in *De venatione sapientiae*: “Gaudet igitur unum quodque de sua singularitate, quae tanta in ipso est non quod non pluri-ficabilis, sicut nec in Deo nec mundo nec angelis.”³⁵

Another passage where we encounter this idea of a positive evaluation of the individual developed (though phrased differently) can be found in *De docta ignorantia* II, especially Chapter 2. Every being (*creatura*) is created as a created

31 Nicolas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae*, cap. XXII, 104–106.

32 Cf. Heinz Heimsoeth, *Die sechs großen Themen der abendländischen Metaphysik und der Ausgang des Mittelalters* (Berlin: Georg Stilke, 1922), 242.

33 Nicolas of Cusa, *De beryllo*, cap. XXXI; see also cap. XXIII.

34 Nicolas of Cusa, *De beryllo*, cap. XXXV, 80.

35 “Therefore each rejoices in their own uniqueness which is so great that it cannot be multiplied, neither in God nor in the world nor in the angels.” Nicolas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae*, cap. XXII, 1.

god (*Deus creatus*) in the best possible way that befits each.³⁶ Or has Johannes Hoff phrases it: “Even the humblest creature has the potential to actualise an incomparable and unique mode of perfection.”³⁷ Again, the intention of the Creator is key: while each created being is at the same time perfect and could be more perfect, it embraces and rests in its own perfection (*quiescit omne esse creatum in sua perfectione*), thus loving what it has received from the Creator and cherishing it.³⁸

Scholars like Benz have criticized those approaches that hone in on these passages on the grounds of an unacceptable isolation of particular sections from a perspective already so focused on the dignity of the individual that we see a prejudgment that then, in turn, leads to a selective reading rather than embedding these passages in Cusa’s work as a whole.³⁹ Yet, none of these passages question the irreversible dependence of the individuated being on the One, and its being rooted in (and aimed to return to) the Absolute. Rather, they emphasize simultaneously the uniqueness of the individual and its connection with the species and the Absolute – it is precisely the connection to the latter that gives the individual its value: no one is the same as any other and that is how it *ought* to be – in this way it is also the condition of a harmony that cannot come about without difference.⁴⁰ Thus, the connection between the individual/species and the Absolute will play a key role when revisiting Cusa’s approach to toleration.

2 Diversity in Human Customs and Religious Rites

Without developing Cusa’s anthropological understanding in detail at this point I would like to draw attention to a curious additional factor that Cusa considers with regard to individuation that we have not mentioned yet: the role of place and nutrition. These are unusual considerations as they have special consequen-

³⁶ Cf. Nicolas of Cusa, *De coniecturis*, 191–297 (*liber primus*); 311–517 (*liber secundus* and *liber tertius*), II, cap. II, 328.

³⁷ Hoff, *The Analogical Turn*, 159.

³⁸ Cf. Nicolas of Cusa, *De docta ignorantia*, in *Philosophisch-Theologische Schriften*, ed. Leo Gabriel and trans. Dietlindand Wilhelm Dupré, vol. 1 (Vienna: Herder, 1964), 191–297; 311–517, here *liber II*, cap. II, 330.

³⁹ Benz, *Individualität und Subjektivität*, 83. It seems to me that Benz operates with a particular idea of modern or even contemporary individualism that clearly cannot be found in Cusa.

⁴⁰ Heimsoeth, *Die sechs großen Themen*, 252ff. See also Hoff, *The Analogical Turn*, 159.

ces for how the question of human plurality, including human customs, is to be considered, which, in turn, has a potential impact on the question of toleration.

In the second part of *De coniecturis*, in the already quoted Chapter 8, Cusa explains further how difference in individuation comes about: as indicated with the example of tree and seed, every individual partakes in the species in a different and unique way. What is interesting for our topic is how, for Cusa, in order to unfold the power of the seed in a perfect way, a perfect sustenance is needed, thus emphasizing the importance of nourishment for the way the individual unfolds. Therefore, the development of the individual depends on *two* factors: the potential of the seed (as discussed in detail above) and nourishment: *Ex diversitate (igitur) nutrimenti atque locorum individua variari necesse est.*⁴¹ An excellent seed in an excellent soil will produce more perfect grains, an excellent seed in poor soil will still be less poor than a lesser seed in the same soil and so on. That means, in addition to difference in potential, individuals differ because of a difference in nourishment and of place, even though in poor soil they will never completely lose their potential, or, as he demonstrates with the example of a pear branch that is being grafted onto an apple tree, individuals may, over time, take on characteristics of the environment since over the years the strength (*vis*) of the pear becomes lessened as it becomes more familiar with the apple tree. As we have seen earlier, Cusa had already made clear that the individuation process never finishes. Here sustenance plays also an additional role: with the nourishment changing from more perfect to less perfect and the other way around, so does the growth of the individual.

This argument is also true for place: transferring his example of the pear branch and the apple tree to human beings the cardinal uses his own life experience as illustration: a German in Italy is more German in the first year than in the second and so on.⁴²

Thus, for human beings, the impact of place and nourishment adds an interesting dimension as this is not only true for all things physical but also rational things concerning habits, dogmas etc., which are also a type of nutrition⁴³ – another important factor for expanding on the foundation of toleration later on.

Reflecting on Cusa's position regarding a positive evaluation of individual difference it could be a sensible assumption for the contemporary reader that

⁴¹ Cf. Nicolas of Cusa, *De coniecturis*, II, cap. VIII, 128.

⁴² Cf. Nicolas of Cusa, *De coniecturis*, II, cap. VIII, 130.

⁴³ Nicolas of Cusa, *De coniecturis*, II, cap. VIII, 130: "Haec quidem, uti in sensibili mundor experimur sensibilibus, ita et in rationali rationabiliter ut in moribus, consuetudinibus rationabilibusque doctrinis, quae alimenta quaedam sunt, quae etiam in ipso intellectuali intellectualiter attendere debis."

this would translate into a positive evaluation of a plurality of human customs etc. as well. Yet, the answer is not so simple.

One problem is based in the fact that Cusa applies his insights from agriculture to his reflections on conformity and differences in humanity, where they, combined with Neoplatonic notions of hierarchy, result in higher and lower types of human beings, depending on if they concern themselves more with things of the mind and eternity or the senses while, at the same time, participating in the unity of the species (*in unitate itaque speciei*).⁴⁴

In a similar manner, geography matters: we understand the variety of human cultures in their different aspects (*varietatem in complexione, figuris, vitiis et moribus, subtilitate et grossitie*) by looking at their place of living. Thus, we observe, according to Cusa, a descent from south to north with the highest residing in places like Egypt and India, the middle such as, e.g., Greece, Africa, and Rome, and the lowest further north. In general, all differences including strengths and weaknesses are to be assessed in this manner.⁴⁵

This then, consequently, impacts on how human beings participate in religion: while the human being is essentially always already *homo religious* (*quoniam omnibus hominibus inest, uti hac via conspicis, a natura specificata religio*), the type of religion they adhere to, follows from the three types of humanity: the highest and freest types of human beings participate in the intellectual One beyond reason and the senses, the second operate within the limits of reason, and the third and lowest is totally absorbed with the senses. Following his own logic this also leads Cusa to the rather interesting conclusion that it is in the southern parts we find in the corresponding religions (which are the most intellectual) the greatest concern with, e.g., abstract arts like mathematics; in the middle with arts concerning reason, such as dialectics, rhetoric, law; and in the north the mechanistic arts that are concerned with the senses. All of them are necessary, Cusa states, so that the essential nature of humanity (*una unius speciei natura*) is participated in by all in a manifold manner.⁴⁶

For the final point on this matter we turn to *De pace fidei*, probably the most referenced and best-known work when examining Cusa on (interreligious) toleration. While Cusa does not discuss his ideas on individuation and its conse-

⁴⁴ Nicolas of Cusa, *De coniecturis*, II, cap. XV, 162–164.

⁴⁵ Nicolas of Cusa, *De coniecturis*, II, cap. XV, 168. Not only differences in habits, tool use, living etc. are to be understood in this manner but, of course, also external physical traits like skin colour, height etc.

⁴⁶ Cf. Nicolas of Cusa, *De coniecturis*, II, cap. XV, 166–168. One may assume that the rather curious evaluation of cultures from south to north is a reflection on cultures and religions before the arrival of Christianity.

quence for valuing individual difference here in an explicit manner, he does reflect on human plurality and the difference in rites, ethos etc. as a consequence of a world created in difference, always keeping in mind that even though the many forms of human values etc. develop distinctively because of their spatial and temporal embeddedness, that difference is not absolute but connected through participation in our humanity (which is, as we have indicated above, an *indivibilis humanitas*) and, of course, through our *humanitas* to the Creator.

As I have discussed in “How Tolerable Is Cusa’s Tolerance?,” because Cusa switches his perspective of evaluation here from an ontological-theological viewpoint to one that is concerned with dogma, the evaluation criteria also change. Thus, in *De pace fidei*, Cusa actually operates with three different evaluations of human plurality. In the discussed context of interreligious harmony, the aspect of human plurality that is expressed in religious practices, etc. is to be valued only as long as they adhere to certain universal principles and exist in harmony as an expression of the One – which leads us directly to the question of toleration.

3 Consequences for Toleration

There is no question that the insights regarding the *docta ignorantia*, grounded in themselves like all of Cusa’s thinking in faith, remain the stronger pillar in any argument that looks for basing an argument for toleration in Cusa: truth and traditions, that assume themselves to be true, are not the same, as Cusa states in the very beginning of *De pace fidei*, and nothing intelligible is understood in the way it actually is; true for anything in the world and certainly for God. Yet, we will leave these aside for the moment and focus on the role of individuation and plurality in the context of the question of toleration.⁴⁷

As we have shown, there *could be* a substantial ontological foundation for toleration, although already in the above-developed thoughts on the plurality of humanity we saw the introduction of a clear hierarchy with regard to human difference. Due to the already mentioned shift in perspective owing to the different goal of the work (how to argue for interreligious harmony), this now becomes even more pronounced in *De pace fidei*.

⁴⁷ The considerations in this part are mainly based on what I have developed in my article “How Tolerable Is Cusa’s Tolerance?,” especially part 3, “Cusa’s Engagement with Islam Revisited.”

True, also here Cusa does accept, again in Chapter 1, that difference is part of God's creation, which is thus true as well for human plurality, e. g., in the form of different peoples, a consequence of which is diversity: "Multiplicatus est ex uno populosus multus ... magna multitudo non potest esse sine multa diversitate."⁴⁸ Out of this diversity and essentially intertwined with it (as we have seen in the previous section) arises a multitude of rites, at least partly due to the fact that it seems to belong essentially to human nature to mistake long standing customs for the truth.⁴⁹ This means that we actually see *two* reasons for the diversity in customs: the natural plurality of humankind and the mistake of confusing one's rites with the truth, and thus human error or weakness.⁵⁰

From this it further follows that we are actually looking at three different ways of evaluating human difference: the ontological difference really is described as a fact in a non-evaluative and thus indifferent manner (1). The diversity in customs and rights which arises, while it may and indeed does lead to strife,⁵¹ ought to be tolerated for the sake of peace (2). However, this toleration ends when these different rites actually lead away from faith (3).⁵² Ontological difference and *especially* its consequences are therefore to be tolerated (though not necessarily accepted) for the goal of religious harmony and peace as insisting on conformity in all things (*conformitatem in omnibus*) may lead to a disturbance of peace. However, this toleration ends where the belief in the one God and salvation are endangered – which gives us Cusa's argument for rejection (3).⁵³

Cusa finishes with one hopeful and positive note in *De pace fidei* with regard to diversity in rites: it may be, he states famously, that the striving for surpassing the others in their praise of God and the world, may actually lead to greater devotion altogether⁵⁴ – a statement that is probably the closest to Lessing's famous *Ringparabel* in Cusa's work.

Of course, how the One unfolds in the many through the means of the latter participating in the former – a crucial principle in Cusa's ontology – is also central in *De pace fidei* and most pointedly expressed in the famous and often quot-

48 Cf. Nicolas of Cusa, *De pace fidei*, in *Philosophisch-Theologische Schriften*, ed. Leo Gabriel, trans. Dietlind and Wilhelm Dupré, vol. 3 (Vienna: Herder, 1967), 705–797, cap. I, 708.

49 Yet to make this mistake belongs essentially to human nature: "Habet autem hoc humana terrana condicio, quod longa consuetudo, quae in naturam transisse accipitur, pro veritate defenditur." Cf. Nicolas of Cusa, *De pace fidei*, cap. I, 710.

50 Cf. Gottlöber, "How Tolerable Is Cusa's Tolerance?," 11, section 44.

51 Cf. Nicolas of Cusa, *De pace fidei*, cap. I, 706.

52 Cf. Nicolas of Cusa, *De pace fidei*, cap. XVIII and XIX, 794.

53 Cf. Nicolas of Cusa, *De pace fidei*, cap. XIX, 794.

54 Nicolas of Cusa, *De pace fidei*, cap. XIX, 796.

ed phrase *una religio in rituum varietate*. However, this is also where the role of ontological diversity ends for Cusa's argument with regard to toleration as, of course, Cusa's 'universal' principles are essentially Catholic (and would not hold nowadays as universally agreeable). It is therefore more the search for common elements that allows for the widest possible application for tolerance that connects us with Cusa's approach – as this search is as central now for toleration discourses as it was in Cusa's time.

4 Conclusion

Implicitly or explicitly, the acknowledgement of the given plurality and diversity of human existence, both individual and cultural, coupled with an increasing agnosticism or skepticism towards universal and 'last' truths, especially religious, and the rise of the scientific paradigm, has served since the nineteenth century as an increasing argument for pluralism or at least a tolerant approach towards otherness, religious or otherwise.

In many ways these debates about Cusa and his positions on toleration, individuality, etc. overlap and fit in with the debates whether Cusa can be already seen as a modern thinker or not. The beauty of Cusa is, after all, as Klaus Jacobi once pointed out, that he can be approached both from the modern and from the medieval perspectives. Both positions, while in parts incommensurable, can be supported by textual evidence. The same seems to be true for the question on Cusa's stance on toleration (where it depends to which texts we look)⁵⁵ and the value of individuality.

Cusa's position remains an interesting one in the context of these debates: for example, with regard to individuality we see a shift (rather than a break) to a greater emphasis on the value of the individuated being *as* individuated due to the fact that "[w]hile rooted in the piety and Weltbild of the Latin Christendom, he was also deeply attuned to the new humanistic and scientific spirit of his age."⁵⁶

Yet, while we recognize the roots of certain ideas, Cusa did not argue for a pluralistic approach to religious truth or freedom of religion – indeed, as Schlüter and Grötter point out, once we see an argument for freedom of religion(s),

⁵⁵ See for this also Euler, "Dialogue and Toleration in Cusa."

⁵⁶ Burton, Hollmann, and Parker, *Nicholas of Cusa*, 1.

the need for toleration disappears.⁵⁷ Thus, while Cusa does accept a *plurality* of customs and religious rites to a certain degree (grounded in both our ontological plurality and, following from that, a diversity in customs), he cannot be considered a *pluralist* as Aikin and Aleksander hold,⁵⁸ certainly not in a contemporary sense. What we do see, however, is an argument for toleration from an inclusivist perspective.

Cusa's arguments for harmony in diversity remain deeply rooted in a Trinitarian notion of concordance, ultimately grounded in God and Christ.⁵⁹ Likewise, while liberal and enlightened positions on the value of the individual, human plurality, and difference, and arguments for both toleration and its limits tend to be anthropocentric, Cusa's position clearly remains theocentric at all times: "The thinking of Nicolaus of Cues rests on faith."⁶⁰ Thus, any argument for embracing or tolerating difference are guided by a *rationabilitas* firmly grounded in theological principles.⁶¹

These conclusions should not be surprising as many linked discourses beyond the ones mentioned, such as the debates on subjective rights, were still only in their infancy.⁶² What remains most striking for me, however, is the discrepancy between Cusa's reflections on the diversity of the world and its application to the question of interreligious toleration, the logic of the philosophical argument overruled by dogma, by political and existential interests. Yet, on the other hand, this may not be so surprising at all if we remind ourselves of the dependence of the finite individual on the Absolute: thus, anything that threatened the awareness of this essential connection had to be rejected as it would destroy also the very foundation of the desired harmony. As the late David Luscombe pointed out, debates concerning "the links between discourse about rights and discourse in particular about the recognition of liberties that are subjective,"⁶³ while already well under way, needed to come much more to the fore to challenge existing dogma and political interests. The second important devel-

57 "Religionsfreiheit und religiöse Toleranz schließen einander aus." Gisela Schlüter and Ralf Grötzer, "Toleranz," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998), cols. 1251–1262, at col. 1253.

58 Aikin and Jason, "Nicholas of Cusa's 'De pace fidei,'" 219–235.

59 Cf., Burton, Hollmann, and Parker, *Nicholas of Cusa*, xix.

60 "Das Denken des Nikolaus von Kues beruht auf Glauben." Klaus Jacobi, "Ontologie aus dem Geist 'belehrten Nichtwissens,'" in *Nikolaus von Kues*, ed. Klaus Jacobi (Freiburg and Munich: Karl Alber, 1979), 7–55, at 53.

61 See for this argument Gottlöber, "How Tolerable Is Cusa's Tolerance?"

62 Cf. Luscombe, "Toleration and Rights," in Dunne and Gottlöber, *Tolerance and Concepts of Otherness in Medieval Philosophy*, 20 ff.

63 Luscombe, "Toleration and Rights," 20.

opment still outstanding is, in my opinion, the anthropological turn that we see already in the early liberal thinkers, but which really becomes central only in the twentieth century. Yet, at the same time, the reliance on a shared humanity (despite developments like scientism and the decline of religious beliefs in large parts of Europe) as we see in thinkers like Kuçuradi, remains. One could therefore observe with Cusa that the way was not yet prepared for him to follow his own philosophical argument to its conclusions.

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Chapter 9

Dimensions of Toleration in the Political Theory of Johannes Althusius

Introduction

This chapter deals with the political theory of one of the leading reformist political thinkers in the early modern period: German jurist and civil servant Johannes Althusius (1557–1638).¹ The analysis focuses on the religious character of Althusius's *Politica methodice digesta atque exemplis sacris & profanes illustrata* (1614) which has been under increasing scrutiny for some years now. Previously, Althusius was hailed mainly from a secular point of view that overlooked or downplayed the religious element, but this line of interpretation has lost much of its credibility in light of more recent research. However, there remains a tension between the secular and religious sides of Althusius's theory, as well as between its many interpretations.² I seek to ease these tensions by presenting an interpretation that takes the religious features of Althusius's theory seriously but shows them in their proper place in the structure of the social and political life Althusius presents. As a result, space is cleared for the secular, or rather civil, aspect of social and political life within the overall religious setting of Althusius's theory.

My analysis proceeds in a close reading of Althusius's theory with the purpose of providing a systematic account of key sections in the text. The argument is developed first in section 1 with the introduction of the most important religious elements of Althusius's theory. A distinction is drawn between the general metaphysical and normative features of the world (1.1) and those related to the actual practice and doctrine of religion (1.2). Next, in section 2, Althusius's var-

1 In his *The Immortal Commonwealth: Covenant, Community, and Political Resistance in Early Reformed Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 128, David Henreckson has recently characterized Althusius's prominence in early Reformed thought in two ways: "first, in the sense that his work was given a quasicanonical status by many of his immediate heirs and critics; and second, insofar as his work was a crystallization and even culmination of the thought of many of his contemporaries."

2 For a relatively recent overview on research literature concerning Althusius see e.g., Stephen J. Grabill, introduction to *On Law and Power* by Johannes Althusius (Michigan: CLP Academic, 2013), xxvi–xlii, and Henreckson, *The Immortal Commonwealth*, 129–132.

ied, even contradictory, views on religious toleration are explained by identifying two separate grounds for toleration: non-coercion of inner thoughts and beliefs (2.1) and prudence (2.2). In section 3, attention is paid to the ways tolerated persons and groups are excluded or included in common life with the members of the true (Calvinist) religion. The claim is made that the territorial separation of different religions and confessions agrees with some of Althusius's views (3.1), while others fit better with distancing of a social kind (3.2). This entails the conclusion that for Althusius toleration is not so much religious but civil in character. The conclusion is supported by the fact that, while belonging to the true religion is necessary for receiving an ecclesiastical office, it is not a definite criterion for obtaining citizenship (3.3) or a civil office (3.4). Finally, in section 4, I give a short summary of my key findings.

1 Religious Elements of Althusius's Political Theory

As mentioned, Althusius's political theory cannot be considered purely as a secular theory. Accumulated research has in numerous ways argued for the religious, and particularly Reformist (Calvinist), context of Althusius's thought and for the essential position religious ideas have in the social and political life that Althusius is presenting in his theory.³ In the following I will give a short but systematized view on what I see to be the most important religious elements in Althusius's theory.

³ To mention just a few recent examples that relate Althusius's political theory explicitly to its Calvinist background: Jesse Chupp and Cary Nederman, "The Calvinist Background to Johannes Althusius's Idea of Religious Toleration," in *Jurisprudenz, Politische Theorie und Politische Theologie*, ed. Fredrick S. Carney, Heinz Schilling, and Dieter Wyduckel (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2004), 243–260; John Witte, *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Mario Miegge, "Communicatio mutua (Althusius und Calvin)," in *Politisch-rechtliches Lexikon der Politica des Johannes Althusius*, ed. Corrado Malandrino and Dieter Wyduckel (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2010), 147–155; Cornel Zwierlein, "Consociatio," in Malandrino and Wyduckel, *Politisch-rechtliches Lexikon der Politica des Johannes Althusius*, 175–200; Corrado Malandrino, "The Calvinistic Covenant's Theology and Federalism: The Experience of Althusius," in *Reformierte Staatslehre in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Heinrich de Wall (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2014), 99–131; David Henreckson, *The Immortal Commonwealth*.

1.1 The Religious Underpinnings of Althusius's Theory

The first observation concerns Althusius's notions of human nature and salvation. In a nutshell, Althusius combines the Augustinian notion of human deficiency and the idea that salvation cannot be achieved in isolation with the Aristotelian notion of the importance of community. As a result, human beings are driven to social life, or in Althusius's terms, to symbiotic life, to satisfy the needs of both the body and the soul, where the latter include not only the need to develop reason and morals but also to attain eternal life. In Althusius's setting, human beings are fundamentally social, or symbiotic, beings who not only need the help and support of others to provide for their needs but require mutual life to provide for the needs of others, and to answer and fulfill their calling from God that directs them to their proper place and function in society.⁴

The concern over body and soul is unambiguously present in politics. Althusius writes that the final cause of politics is "a comfortable, useful, and happy life, and common welfare; so that we can live a peaceful and quiet life with piety and honor ... a society which aims at a life where it is possible to worship God without error and quietly."⁵ The care for bodily and spiritual matters carries on to the purpose and duties of governing in general and manifests further in the dual character of sovereign rights and their administration as these involve again rights and duties pertaining to both the body and soul.⁶

⁴ For the human condition, see e.g., Carl Joachim Friedrich, introduction to *Politica Methodice Digesta of Johannes Althusius (Althaus)* by Johannes Althusius (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), lxx–lxxi, and Bettina Koch, "Johannes Althusius: Between Secular Federalism and the Religious State," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Federalism*, ed. Ann Ward and Lee Ward (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 82–83.

⁵ Johannes Althusius, *Politica methodice digesta atque exemplis sacris & profanes illustrate* (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1981), I § 30: "Finis politicae, est usus vitae commodae, utilis, & felicitis, atque salutis communis; 1.Tim.6.2.2. ut tranquillam & quietam vitam degamus cum omni pietate & honestate, Luc.6.1.74.75. Psal. 107.7.36 ... Finis quoque est conservatio humanae societatis, cujus finis est, habere vitam, in qua possis sine errore & quiete Deo inservire." Note that when the reference is made directly to Latin text in Althusius 1981 it means either that (a) the translation in question is mine, as in this case, and/or (b) that the referred section is not included in Carney's existing abridged translation which I, however, prefer to use as a general reference for accessibility and the usage of which is indicated by reference to Althusius 1995. Note also that the reference is given by chapter (I) and section (§ 30) number, as is customary. Finally, see also I § 3 where Althusius writes that the end of human beings is a "holy, just, comfortable, and happy symbiosis."

⁶ Johannes Althusius, *Politica. Johannes Althusius, an abridged translation of Politics Methodically Set Forth and Illustrated with Sacred and Profane Examples*, ed. and trans. Frederick S. Carney (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995), I § 13–17, IX § 28, 31–32, and chapters XXVIII–XXX.

Thirdly, between human nature and its end, the symbiotic life takes place in a world that has an objective normative order. This order is inscribed in varying degrees on the hearts of human beings, in their consciences.⁷ It is further clarified and reinforced by God's revelation, particularly by the Decalogue and the double commandment of love.⁸ The result is a combination of natural and biblical law that forms a common and universal normative order given for all people and not only for Christians.⁹ This common law (*lex communis/jus commune*) seems dominantly biblical in character, because Althusius approaches it mainly through the Decalogue.¹⁰ Essentially the common law constitutes general principles that still need to be applied and elaborated for local conditions in the form of proper laws of particular communities.¹¹

Finally, Althusius paints a picture of an interventionist God, as the fear of God and his sound worship are the causes of private and public happiness, whereas contempt of God and the neglect of divine worship are causes of all evil and misfortune.¹² Even an evil commonwealth is sheltered from the wrath of God if it includes pious people, which gives the ruler an incentive to nourish Christian religion in the realm.¹³ Apart from the last point, the aforementioned elements relate rather to metaphysical features of the world than to practice of a certain religion or confession, however, we will see that the stage is being set for the one and only true religion.

1.2 Religious Pact and Public Jurisdiction

My interpretation of the proper position of religion in Althusius's theory hinges on two ideas: first, on the distinction between the general metaphysical features of the world described above and the actual practice and doctrine of a religion,

7 Althusius, *Politica*, XXI § 19–21.

8 Althusius, *Politica*, XXI § 22–28.

9 Althusius, *Politica*, XXI § 29.

10 The exact relationship between natural and biblical law in Althusius's theory and the character of their resulting combination have been of interest for a long time. On the one hand, it has been suggested that Althusius provides a natural law interpretation of the Bible, and on the other, that he provides a biblical/Christological interpretation of natural law (Grabill, introduction, xxxi–xxxii). In any case, it is clear that not all biblical norms are part of the common law, but rather describe Jewish proper law (Althusius, *Politica*, XXI § 33–41).

11 Althusius, *Politica*, XXI § 30–33.

12 Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 8–9.

13 Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 8–9.

and second, on the distinction between the private and public dimensions of religion.

In Althusius's view religion spreads only through God's calling and exposure to his word.¹⁴ The calling from God is a private matter between an individual and God. Exposure to the word of God can be made public, for example, though education and schooling, which Althusius recommends, but it is also a private matter because the duty to instruct children in the true knowledge of God is assigned to their parents, that is, to the private family community.¹⁵

Crucially, the public dimension of the (true) religion comes about only through the religious covenant (*pactum religiosum*) made between God, the people, and the ruler (i.e., *summus magistratus*) of a commonwealth.¹⁶ By it "the magistrate, together with the members of the realm commonly and solemnly consenting in councils of the realm, promise to God the performance of this two-fold duty"¹⁷ of "introduction of orthodox religious doctrine and practice in the realm"¹⁸ and "the conservation, defense, and transmission to posterity of this doctrine and practice."¹⁹ This covenant does not establish religion *per se* in a commonwealth, but instead it serves as a legitimation for the public jurisdiction and administration of ecclesiastical matters for the good of the soul. Moreover, it provides a conceptual tool for holding the contracting parties to their pledged word. God is the ultimate vindicator of the covenant, but in the relationship between the people and the ruler both can hold each other accountable for the observance of the covenant.²⁰

14 Althusius, *Politica*, VII § 6; IX § 37; XXVIII § 64.

15 Althusius, *Politica*, II § 41; III § 37; IX § 37–38; XXVIII § 33–36.

16 The *pactum religiosum* is discussed in XXVIII § 15–26. In addition, there are two other types or phases of covenanting: (1) agreement (*consensus*) between the members of the commonwealth to establish common life with certain laws and rights, and (2) a pact (*pactum/contractum mandati*) between the people and the ruler concerning the administration of these laws and rights (Althusius, *Politica*, IX § 1, 3, 5, 7; XVIII § 10; XIX § 6–7).

17 Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 15: "Utrumque hoc officium, pacto religioso, magistratus cum regni membris Deo solemniter in regni comitiis, communi consensu promittit" (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XXVIII § 15).

18 Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 13: "... de doctrina & exercitio religionis orthodoxae in regnum introducendis" (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XXVIII § 13).

19 Althusius, *Politica*, XVIII § 13: "... de iisdem conservandis, defendendis, & ad posteros transmittendis" (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XXXVIII § 13).

20 Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 17–19.

2 Religious Toleration in the World of the One True Religion

In this section we will consider the situation where a religious pact has been made, and both the civil and ecclesiastical administration has been established for the good of the body and soul of subjects. The main aim is to explore the dimensions of religious toleration in such a setting. Due to strict space constraints, I refer the reader to works of Bettina Koch²¹ and Francesco Ingravalle²² for a detailed examination of Althusius's account of the ecclesiastical administration and limit myself to those features that are most relevant for current purposes. Unlike other researchers of the subject I will present Althusius's remarks on religious toleration in a way that clearly distinguishes between two separate grounds for toleration and consequently provides two lines of argument to consider. Partly for this reason the conclusions drawn differ from most previous analyses, which, however, rightly note a certain graduality in Althusius's views on toleration. My reading conflicts especially with the rather optimistic account of Jesse Chupp and Cary Nederman²³ and is more in line with Diego Quaglioni's²⁴ critical analysis.

2.1 Principle of Non-coercion of Inner Thought and Beliefs

The first ground for religious toleration is to be found in Althusius's condemnation of forceful conversion and violent religious persecution in realms where the true religion does not thrive.²⁵ He holds that faith and religion belong to the imperium of God, and not that of an earthly ruler. Althusius writes that to God "alone the secrets and intimate recesses of the heart are known. And he administers his kingdom, which is not of this world, through his ministers of the Word.

²¹ Koch, "Johannes Althusius."

²² Francesco Ingravalle, "Theologie und politischer Calvinismus im XXVIII. Kapitel der *Politica methodice digesta* des Johannes Althusius. Beobachtungen," in de Wall, *Reformierte Staatslehre in der Frühen Neuzeit*.

²³ Chupp and Nederman, "Johannes Althusius's Idea of Religious Toleration."

²⁴ Diego Quaglioni, "Judaism and Religious Toleration in Althusius," in *Konfessionalität und Jurisprudenz in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Christoph Strohm and Heinrich de Wall (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2009).

²⁵ Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 63–65.

For this reason, faith is said to be a gift of God, not of Caesar. It is not subject to will, nor can it be coerced.”²⁶

It is fundamental to grasp what exactly is forbidden for the earthly ruler on these grounds: it is the violent invasion of the inner thoughts and beliefs of his subjects as he is “forbidden in his administration to impose penalty over the thought of men.”²⁷ This does not amount to a full-blown freedom of thought, because the ruler is bound to promote the true religion by establishing schools and other functions of ecclesiastical administration that spread the word of God with the sword of spirit instead of corporal arms.²⁸ Likewise, the ruler must prohibit the importation and sale of heretical books, thus restricting in effect the spreading of wrong thoughts and beliefs.²⁹ Crucially, the external behavior of people still lies within the ruler’s jurisdiction: “[h]eretics, so far as they are delinquent in external actions, are to be punished just as any other subjects, even the otherwise pious.”³⁰

In the light of these remarks, Althusius’s rather definite statement that the “administrator ought to establish and permit only one religion in his realm, and that the true one,”³¹ means that he should only permit external behavior compatible with the true religion, and in the case of inner life, promote the spread of thoughts and beliefs consistent with the true religion and restrict the spreading of the contrary.³² Compatibility with true religion means at a bare minimum that public expressions of false religions, heresies, or ungodliness, are not allowed.³³ For example, such impious and profane people for

26 Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 63: “... Deus solus in haec habet imperium, *Matth.c.10*. & huic soli arcana, cordisque recessus intimi sunt noti, *Act.c.10*. & suum regnum, quod non est de hoc mundo, *Joh.c.18*. per suos ministros verbi administrat, *Ephes.c.1.6.5*. *1.Corinth.c.12*. *Act.c.20*. & fides ideo donum Dei, non Caesaris dicitur, quae nullo modo vult, vel potest cogi” (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XXVIII § 63).

27 Althusius *Politica*, XXVIII § 64: “... Cogitationibus hominum, poenam in politica administratione imponere vetatur, ...” (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XXVIII § 64). See also § 65 for the consequences of not abiding to this limitation.

28 Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 64.

29 Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 68.

30 Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 64: “... Quatenus haeretici externis actionibus delinquant, sunt illi puniendi, sicut quilibet alii subditi, etiam alias pii” (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XXVIII § 64). See also § 26 and 49.

31 Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 51.

32 Althusius (*Politica methodice*, XXVIII § 51) also clearly stated that the ruler must restore the fallen or depraved worship of God and actively reform the Church.

33 On the face of it, Chupp and Nederman (“Johannes Althusius’s Idea of Religious Toleration,” 253–254) have a different interpretation since they write that “Althusius encourages tolerance of those whose unbelief is not manifest in open rebellions.” However, they also set the threshold

whom there is hope of correction can be tolerated, but this leniency does not extend to manifest impiety and profanity, like atheism, epicureanism, or libertinism that must be expelled from the realm.³⁴

As a somewhat special case Althusius concedes from the outset that a pious ruler can, with a good conscience, allow both Jews and Papists (Roman Catholics) to live within the realm.³⁵ However, this does not mean that they can openly practice their religion, since Althusius does not allow synagogues or temples.³⁶ Later he notes that practitioners of disapproved religions should not be allowed to have even secret meetings and colleges.³⁷ This is revealing, because *collegia* in principle are, in Althusius's systematization, private, not public, communities.³⁸ Thus, and quite consistently, the practice of other religions is severely restricted. It seems that the only sphere beyond one's inner thoughts where Althusius is not willing to extend the restrictions is the family community.

A further point of consideration arises in relation to the treatment of heretics in a well-constituted realm (*imperium*) – a setting which I think is intended as a depiction of the ideal situation where the true religion does thrive.³⁹ Here Althusius distinguishes between severe heresies that tear up the foundations of faith, such as Arianism,⁴⁰ and those of a milder kind that err in some articles of faith but leave the foundations intact, such as Novatian⁴¹ heresy.⁴² The first kind

for open rebellions quite low since a “non-believer who incites unbelief in others is a seditious person” and accountable to the magistrate. I can agree with this, if ‘inciting’ is taken simply as stating one’s unbelief publicly, and thus the reference to ‘open rebellion’ in the first quote means just ‘public unbelief.’

34 Althusius, *Politica*, IX § 44; XXVIII § 52.

35 Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 53, 56.

36 Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 53, 56.

37 “Nec permittet ... ut conventicula & collegia improbatæ religionis clam habentur, feret ...” (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XXVIII § 69).

38 Althusius, *Politica*, II § 2, 13, and Chapter IV for *collegia* in general.

39 Discussion in XXVIII § 56–59.

40 Arianism was a fourth-century Christian doctrine concerning the nature and relationship between God the Father and Son of God which stresses the unity rather than the trinity of God. It was named after Arius (256–336), a Christian presbyter from Alexandria, Egypt. The doctrine was condemned as heresy by the Council of Nicaea in 325. The fact that non- and antitrinitarian views designated as Arianism emerged (and were condemned) also following Protestant reformation can explain Althusius's usage of the term.

41 Novatian heresy was a third-century Christian sect named after the Christian theologian Novatianus (200–258) who was against permitting the *Lapsi* (those who had denied their faith) back into the Church but who also defended the trinity doctrine against many objecting views. Although he and his followers were excommunicated in 251, the Novatian sect survived for several centuries.

should not be tolerated at all, but treated severely by the magistrate with exile, prison, or sword, whereas the second kind warrants admonition, and if not effective, ultimately excommunication.⁴³ The reason for such non-toleration is the need to prevent the corruption of the faithful.⁴⁴ Even here though, in accordance with Althusius's other remarks, if heretical thoughts and ideas are not shared or made public, we can presume that no penalty can be prescribed.

Althusius also recommends restrain in judging and excluding those who err, if the error or doctrine has not yet been found a manifest heresy in a free synod (ecclesiastical assembly).⁴⁵ Elsewhere, referring to a Swiss Protestant theologian, Benedict Aretius (1505–1574), he recommends moderation in handling differences of opinion in the Church, and cautions, for example, against demanding decision on all opinions in even most minute matters.⁴⁶ He states that “no mode of thought has ever come forth so perfect that the judgment of all learned men would subscribe to it.”⁴⁷ All in all, these last points indicate that within the Church there is, or should be, at least some room for difference of opinion, but the resolution of the synod is conclusive in respect to the demarcation between heresy and pure religion.

2.2 Prudence as Basis of Toleration

Based on what has been stated, Althusius does not really come across as a champion of religious toleration. Quite the opposite. The covenant with God establishes a duty to promote and protect the true religions and leaves only the inner thoughts and beliefs of subjects beyond the coercive powers of the ruler and submits even those to the persuasive powers of the word of God. Subjects cannot insult the true religion or promote a false one without incurring more or less severe punishment. This holds across the different situations considered above (a realm where the true religion does not thrive, Jews and Papists, and a well-constituted realm).

⁴² Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 56. See also IX § 42–43.

⁴³ Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 56–57. Ch. IX § 42–43, where Althusius writes more leniently that separation from Church should not be given based on such errors that do not touch the fundamentals of faith.

⁴⁴ Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 57.

⁴⁵ Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 58–59.

⁴⁶ Althusius, *Politica*, IX § 42–43.

⁴⁷ Althusius, *Politica*, IX § 43: “... Nam nullum unquam ingenium tam elimatum emersit, cujus iudicio omnium doctorum sententiae subscriberent” (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, IX § 43).

The picture is significantly different when Althusius introduces the second ground for religious toleration, which seems to extend the scope of toleration considerably:

But it is asked, when certain cities or estates in a realm embrace different opinions in their creeds – for the defense of which each alleges the word of God – whether the magistrate who embraces the opinion of one party may persecute the remaining dissenters by force of arms and the sword. We may say in this case that the magistrate who is not able, without peril to the commonwealth, to change or overcome the discrepancy in religion and creed ought to tolerate the dissenters for the sake of public peace and tranquility, blinking his eyes and permitting them to exercise unapproved religion, lest the entire realm, and with it the household of the church, be overthrown. He shall therefore tolerate the practice of diverse religions as a skilled navigator bears with diverse and conflicting winds and clashing waves. Just as amidst these winds and waves the navigator brings his ship safely into the harbor, so the magistrate directs the commonwealth in a manner that keeps it free from ruin for the welfare of the church.⁴⁸

However, when Chupp and Nederman quote this section as evidence for toleration in Althusius's theory, they miss completely that in it, toleration is based on political prudence only.⁴⁹ Here the ruler would still be well within his jurisdiction to drive out the practitioners of false religions, but he should do it only if it is practically possible. Quaglioni instead hits the mark when he notes that "the magistrate cannot permit religions prohibited by law ... unless this prohibition constitutes a serious danger for the State" and that "[a]part from this case, the magistrate cannot tolerate public exercise of other religions."⁵⁰

48 Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 66: "Verum quaeritur, quando in regno civitates vel status quidam discrepantes in confessione sententias amplectuntur, pro quarum defensione quilibet verbum Dei allegat: an tum magistratus, qui unius partis sententiam amplectitur, reliquos dissentientes armis & gladio persequi possit. Hoc in casu dicimus, quod magistratus qui sine Reip. periculo & turbatione mutare, vel tollere non potest religionis & confessionis discrepantiam, ob pacis & tranquillitatis publicae causam, tolerare debeat dissentientes, connivendo & permitten doexercitium religionis improbatæ eousque, donec Deus reliquos illuminet, ne alias totum regnum & cum eo ecclesiae hospitium evertatur. Vide *Luc.c.24. 11. 25.* Vide exempla *1. Reg.c.14. 6.22. 2. Reg.c.12. 6.14. 6.18. Dan.c.3. 6.6.* & alia apud Joh. Gerard. *quaest. polit. cent. ult.* Diversarum igitur religionum exercitium non aliter tolerabit, quam peritus naucerus diversos & contrarios ventos & inter se certantes fluctus, ut sicut hic inter ventos & fluctus pugnantes navem salvam in portum adducit, ita ille Remp. a ruina immunem ad salutem ecclesiae gubernet" (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XXVIII § 66).

49 Chupp and Nederman, "Johannes Althusius's Idea of Religious Toleration," 252.

50 Quaglioni, "Judaism and Religious Toleration in Althusius," 233–234.

It is significant that peace is now considered as a higher good than religious unity.⁵¹ However, this should not be taken as a sign of a total reversal of priorities. Rather, peace is a necessary condition for the existence of the commonwealth and for the practice of the true religion by the faithful in that commonwealth. Althusius makes it also clear that toleration of other religions is not an acknowledgement of their validity, nor is it the case that the ruler could embrace more than one religion or decide against the word of God.⁵² The religious pact is still intact and binding, but the difference in respect to the ideal situation is that for prudential reasons it is not imposed on all subjects.

The difference in respect to the situation discussed above where the true religion does not thrive in the realm is the power and status of those who uphold false beliefs. Elsewhere, when Althusius writes about toleration, his analysis concentrates on the ruler–subject relationship where the subjects are considered as particulars (e.g., heretic, atheist etc.) or groups (e.g., Jews, Papists). Here, instead, at the stake is the ruler–member relationship, because for Althusius the cities and provinces – instead of individuals – are the members of the commonwealth, and the estates and/or ephors are their representatives.⁵³ The scope of toleration is now extended in this ruler–member relationship, but only for prudential reasons, because merely the fact that the opposer of the true religion is a member of the commonwealth does not grant immunity – or any sort of freedom of religion – but by default calls for a retribution from the ephors of the realm.⁵⁴

3 How the Tolerated Belong in the Commonwealth

Having explored the religious character of Althusius's model for the commonwealth and the dimensions of religious toleration in it, it is now possible to ask a fundamental question about belonging to that commonwealth. Based on what has been stated, there is hardly any doubt that first and foremost Althu-

⁵¹ Indeed, Althusius generally emphasizes (a) the need for harmony, concord, fairness, and mutual affection, etc. and (b) the magistrate's role in fostering them (see e.g., VI § 46–47, XXXI *in toto*). In case of toleration, the difficulty arises from the fact the especially Christian religion is contributing to concord and happiness of the commonwealth (XXVIII § 8). Consequently, unbelievers pose a potential threat to harmonious life which the magistrate needs to deal with.

⁵² Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 65.

⁵³ Althusius, *Politica*, IX § 5; XVIII § 48–62; XXXIII § 1, 4, 11, 20, 30.

⁵⁴ Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XXVIII § 60.

sius's design for social and political life privileges followers of the true religion. Especially their aspiration for a pious and holy – as well as otherwise good – life is advanced by investing the earthly ruler with powers to promote and protect the true religion. Other religions are tolerated only to an extent that a modern reader would hardly call it toleration at all.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, I will argue that this does not mean that followers of other confessions and religions would be entirely excluded. There are ways in which they are part of the common life. Specifically, under certain restrictions they can take part in civil life (*secularis communio*), even if they are excluded from ecclesiastical life (*ecclesiastica communio*). My argument is directed against interpretations which tend to fuse civil and ecclesiastical life together, with the consequences that the tolerated become an anomaly.⁵⁶ Note that, while Althusius uses the terms 'secular' and 'civil' interchangeably, this does not mean that the civil life would be secular in our sense of the term.⁵⁷ As we will see, this holds even after separating civil and ecclesiastical life from each other.

3.1 A Solution: Territorial Separation of Different Religions

Koch has provided an elegant way to reconcile Althusius's secular federalism with his religious views.⁵⁸ Before we can appreciate the solution, a couple of explanations are in order. Federalism refers here to the idea that, for Althusius, society consists of different types of communities that are formed from the bottom up – from families and guilds (*collegia*), through cities and provinces, all the way to the commonwealth, and even beyond to confederations – which can retain

55 Even Chupp and Nederman ("Johannes Althusius's Idea of Religious Toleration," 256) acknowledge that "Althusius can hardly be called a proponent of modern secular toleration."

56 Intended or not, this seems to happen with almost all the readings that emphasize the religious elements of Althusius's theory as most of them do not even consider the distinction between the followers of the true religion and others. Chupp and Nederman's interpretation is in this respect exceptional as they consider that the tolerated have a real place in Althusius's commonwealth. Koch's interpretation also makes room for the integration of followers of other religions in Althusius's commonwealth but in a more qualified manner than Chupp and Nederman's. Since in general I find Koch's interpretation to be the strongest and most agreeable in its attempt to account for both the civil and ecclesiastical side of Althusius's commonwealth, I will aim my constructive critique against it.

57 See also Koch, "Johannes Althusius," 83, and Henreckson, *The Immortal Commonwealth*, 155, for the distinction between secular/civil and religious dimensions of common life.

58 Koch, "Johannes Althusius."

their rights and laws even after becoming members of larger communities.⁵⁹ This does not sit well with Althusius's religious views because religious affairs are conducted in a centralized way from the top down. For example, while there are ecclesiastical functions present in cities and especially in provinces, these are directed by the supreme magistrate and ecclesiastical administration he establishes.⁶⁰ The result seems to be that while there can be different local laws and rights adapted to local conditions on civil matters, there can hardly be great local variation in laws concerning religious matters, since pure practice and doctrine of the true religion is enforced from above.⁶¹

Instead of laws, for Koch the unifying factor in the commonwealth is ultimately *censura*.⁶² It enforces common morals in the realm compatible with the true religion with the threat of excommunication of those who do not comply. Together with functions of ecclesiastical administration (e.g., education of the true religion), the enforcement of common morals leads to religious uniformity within the realm in the long run.⁶³ However, based on Althusius's views on toleration Koch concludes that – before such uniformity develops – “Althusius is an advocate of territorial separation between different religions, although they are accepted in the realm.”⁶⁴

Based on my analysis of religious toleration in section 3, other religions are never accepted as publicly manifest, except when they are suffered for the sake of peace and the existence of the commonwealth. Still, the territorial separation of different religions fits perfectly with this scenario, since here it is some of the cities and provinces of the commonwealth that uphold the false religion. These cities and provinces in turn are by nature territorial as well as public and political.⁶⁵ Otherwise, other religions are accepted only as internal beliefs and thoughts – possibly shared in the family sphere, but not openly outside it – which does not really amount to religious tolerance. In such a scenario there is only one accepted manifest religion in the territory of a commonwealth. In a sense, this fits with the idea of territorial separation, if we think that different

59 For Althusius's federalism, see e.g., Koch, “Johannes Althusius,” and Malandrino, “The Calvinistic Covenant's Theology and Federalism.”

60 See e.g., Althusius, *Politica*, VI § 30; VII 4–7; VIII § 6–38; XXVIII § 26–32.

61 Such uniformity is sought with visitation, church assemblies, and laws (Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 38–48).

62 Koch, “Johannes Althusius,” 83–84.

63 Koch, “Johannes Althusius,” 86–87.

64 Koch, “Johannes Althusius,” 85. See also Chupp and Nederman, “Johannes Althusius's Idea of Religious Toleration,” 255.

65 Althusius, *Politica*, V § 5–7.

religions are accepted in different realms. However, the territorial approach to toleration ultimately fails because it is not able to tackle the relations of members of different religions within a civil community.

3.2 Another Solution: Gradual Social Distancing in Common Life

To get to the crux of the matter, let us consider again Althusius's views on the treatment of heretics in a well-constituted realm. Remember that upholding milder heresies warranted at upmost excommunication, whereas severe heresies lead to complete expulsion from the commonwealth. Here we have then at the same time an indication that (1) the borders of the communion of the faithful and the civil community are not the same, but that (2) belonging in the civil community still requires a certain measure of alignment with its religious norms. These are ultimately provided by the common law (natural inclination and Decalogue) as universal and objective normative order of the world:

If the external and civil life of words, deeds and works is accompanied by true faith – together with holiness of thought and desire, and with a right purpose, namely, the glory of God – then it becomes theological. So therefore, when the works of the Decalogue are performed by the Christian to the glory of God because of true faith, they are pleasing to God. But if, to the contrary, they are performed by an infidel or heathen, to whom the Apostle Paul indeed ascribes a natural knowledge of and inclination towards the Decalogue, these works are not able to please God. But in political life even an infidel may be called just, innocent, and upright because of them.⁶⁶

We read that if the Decalogue is followed in external behavior the result is justice, innocence, and uprightness in political life even for infidels and heathens. While it might be that Althusius here has in mind the civil life in non-Christian communities, we can still conclude that for Althusius's ideal commonwealth the result is that atheists and others who (openly) disregard the commandments of

⁶⁶ Althusius, *Politica*, XXI § 41: “... Ad hanc externam & civilem vitam in verbis, gestibus & operibus, si accesserit vera fides, & cogitationum atque cupiditatum sanctitas & scopus rectus, gloria scilicet Dei, tota fiet theologica. Sic igitur quando opera Decalogi a Christiano ex vera fide, ad gloriam Dei fiunt, illa Deo placent. Quod si contra ab infideli & ethnico eadem fiunt, quib. Apostolus etiam decalogi cognitionem & inclinationem naturalem tribuit, *Rom.c.1.* & 2. Deo placere non possunt, quamvis in vita politica ex his etiam infidelis, justus, innocens & integer dicatur ...” (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XXI § 41).

the Decalogue cannot be part of the commonwealth in any sense, neither as part of the ecclesiastical nor as part of civil life.⁶⁷

Further nuances become apparent when we focus on the toleration of Jews and Papist. As already noted, neither of these groups should be allowed to have places of worship for their false religions, but besides that, Althusius gives also other restrictions for their life in the commonwealth which points to segregation between the members of the true religion and others. For example, he recommends separate quarters for Jews, which speaks of physical distancing analogical to territorial separation. The other measures, however, speak more of social distancing: Jews should bear an insignia by which they are recognized, the faithful should not marry with them, participate in their rites, have too close friendships with them, or live too familiarly with them.⁶⁸ Similar measures of social distancing are also applied in relation to the Papists: the pious should not marry with Papists, live too familiarly with them, or partake in their superstitions.⁶⁹

The key point here is that with these restrictions common life is still possible – since the aim is not a complete separation as it is in the case of severe heretics – but that this common life is civil rather than ecclesiastical. As Quaglioni⁷⁰ rightly observes in passing, it is ‘secular relations’ that are submitted to special caution, when Althusius writes that “[in] the *civil intercourse* of the Jews with inhabitants of the realm, most prudent and pious thinks that” the aforementioned “precautions should be observed.”⁷¹ Presumably this secular, or rather civil, intercourse can be related to various occasions and tasks since there are numerous ways in which members of a community can contribute to the common good

⁶⁷ See also Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 71.

⁶⁸ Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 54. Althusius adds that the magistrate should make sure that ungodly rituals are not exercised in the territory of the realm, and that the Jews are to be thought the word of God. Also, Jews must not exercise too high an interest rate, nor mock Christ.

⁶⁹ Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 56. Note that, in accordance with the social distancing interpretation, the severe heretics must be expelled so that they “cannot have fellowship or intercourse with the faithful, impart their disease to others, or infect, ruin, or corrupt them. The magistrate should command men by public interdicts to abstain from fellowship with them” (Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 57).

⁷⁰ Quaglioni, “Judaism and Religious Toleration in Althusius,” 237.

⁷¹ Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XXVIII § 54: “In *conversazione* Judaerum *civili* cum regnicolis, sequentes cautiones plerique prudentes & pii putant esse observandas ...” (emphasis mine). Althusius also specifies that it is up to the theologians to determine “how far it is permitted to have private contact with infidels, atheists, impious men, or persons of different religions by distinguishing between the learned, the faithful, and uneducated, and the weak, and the purposes for which the contacts are to be held” (Althusius, *Politica*, XXVIII § 55).

through their works based on their innate natural inclinations.⁷² Nonetheless, as seen, ecclesiastical communion is possible only if these religious others abandon their former false beliefs and accept the one true religion – just as heretics must abandon their heresies to be included among the faithful.

I conclude so far that the proper sense in which these others – Jews, Papists, and mild heretics – are tolerated is not religious but civil: they are tolerated as part of the civil life but not as part of the religious life of the faithful or as having their own manifest religion – except for prudential reasons.⁷³ The territorial separation between the members of different religions is not necessary. Instead, the faithful are required to uphold gradual social distance to the rest. Yet, such gradual civil toleration does not mean leaving the tolerated to their own accord. They are still under the power of the *censura* (as well as other aspects of civil administration) which enforces common morals compatible with the true religion, but not its practice and doctrine which are to be taught rather than forced on to unbelievers.⁷⁴ For these reasons – and because of the overarching normative order of the common law – civil life is not properly secular, i. e., non-religious, even for the tolerated.

3.3 The Civil Status of the Members of Other Religions

Should such civil toleration be reality, it remains to be determined to what extent the tolerated are then part of the civil sphere. Koch seems to think that they are not citizens in the proper sense.⁷⁵ This is based on Althusius's depiction of citizens enjoying "the same laws (*leges*), *the same religion*, and the same language,

⁷² For the variety of tasks in a commonwealth see e.g., Althusius, *Politica methodice*, II § 16–36; VII § 13–30. Also, by prohibiting too high interest rates charged by Jews, Althusius indirectly recognizes their money-lending function (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XXVIII § 54).

⁷³ Cf. Koch, "Johannes Althusius," 84, who sees that if a person is excommunicated the result is that "fellow citizens are thereafter forbidden to share a table or trade with the punished, the condemned person is no longer either a member of the sacral community, nor a full member of the political community." However, the conclusion is unsatisfactory, because no textual evidence is given for it, only a reference to the traditional medieval conception of excommunication and its results and a statement that in Althusius's Calvinist view results of excommunication are identical.

⁷⁴ See e.g., Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XXX § 15 which indicates that the censor must call even those who do not belong to the accepted religion to the ecclesiastical consistory and to be thought (morally) better there. In XXVIII § 54 it is stated that unbelievers must be taught about the true religion.

⁷⁵ Koch, "Johannes Althusius," 79, 87.

speech, judgment under the law, discipline, customs, money, measures, weights, and so forth,”⁷⁶ leading to an interpretation that in a city there can be only one religion among the citizens – be that false or true. Here Althusius is discussing the rights of the city (*jura civitatis*) and making the point that they “are shared with the people in the suburbs, outposts, and surrounding villages, but not with travelers and foreigners.”⁷⁷

I am not convinced by the presented textual evidence, because in the previous chapter Althusius has already given another and more detailed account of citizenship. There he discusses full citizens, residents, strangers and foreigners, honorary citizens, and citizens of allied countries.⁷⁸ He states that a person acquires full citizenship either by birthright or by the consent and vote of other citizens.⁷⁹ There is no mention of any threshold based on religious beliefs, while there is reference to a French jurist, Petrus Gregorius Tholasanus’s (1540 – 1597) position that the inclusion and exclusion of foreigners in the civil right is to be judged based on the morals, nature, and character of those whom the candidate is in a position to injure or benefit.⁸⁰ Referring to another French jurist and political philosopher, Jean Bodin (1530 – 1596), Althusius also writes that in his time citizenship is often determined by the will, law, and custom of particular cities.⁸¹ Based on these remarks I think it is not so much religion *per se* that is bound to citizenship, but morals and customs among the current citizens. Thus, the list of things shared by the citizens referred to by Koch is descriptive rather than prescriptive.

Of course, it seems entirely plausible that, if the current citizenry is willing to grant full rights only to persons of a certain religion, they can do this. However, I do not see any necessity for such a conclusion, while it is a viable option especially if we consider the citizenry to consist of the faithful determined to ad-

⁷⁶ Althusius, *Politica*, VI § 40: “Utuntur enim cives iisdem legibus, *eadem religione*; Deut.c.16.& per tot. librum Exod. Levit. Num. do Deut. Psal. 122. Ruth c.1. & C.2. lingua, sermone, judicio, disciplina, moribus iisdem, numis, mensuris, ponderibus, ulnis iisdem, &similibus, nec tam singuli sibi, quam omnes omnium similes sunt, ...” (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, VI § 40). Emphasis mine.

⁷⁷ Althusius, *Politica*, VI § 39: “... imo suburbiis, castris, pagis, eisdem subjectis communicantur. Los. part.3.6.13.6.15. num.27. e segg. de jure univers. non vero peregrinis & extraneis, Nehem.c.2.20. ibi, Vobis non est pars aut jus ...” (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, VI § 39). Note here that belonging in a commonwealth is necessarily mediated through belonging in a city, because Althusius does not admit separate citizenship at the level of commonwealth.

⁷⁸ Althusius, *Politica methodice*, V § 13 – 20.

⁷⁹ Althusius, *Politica methodice*, V § 15 – 16.

⁸⁰ Althusius, *Politica methodice*, V § 16.

⁸¹ Althusius, *Politica methodice*, V § 14.

vance their agenda. In such a situation it seems that those who are tolerated in civil life are not necessarily fully welcome to its rights, but they would have to settle for something less – for example, residence rights. In such a situation the recommendation to keep social distance between the members of the true religion and others develops to full-blown political and legal segregation. But again, this is just one possibility among others since there are no built-in connections between citizenship and belonging into a certain religion. In any case, there is a whole spectrum of civil statuses open, and consequently, more or less full membership obtainable for the tolerated – or for members of the true religion when they are in a minority – instead of a binary choice between exclusion and inclusion in the civil community.

3.4 Religion and Holding an Office

As a final remark, I will consider one more sense of belonging: being part of the governors instead of the governed.⁸² When speaking generally of those elected for offices, Althusius notes that wise and virtuous persons should be elected, persons who have experience of things, wisdom, justice, and piety.⁸³ He also recommends that officials should be elected from those who have citizenship by birth and cautions against electing strangers and foreigners, because the latter do not know the local morals and customs, and because their commitment to the good of the commonwealth is suspect.⁸⁴ However, if “the foreigners can be loyal, wise, and gifted, and useful for the commonwealth, then they are to be admitted to some part of it, even to the Senate.”⁸⁵

When it comes to religion, the exclusion of heretics – and the like – is explicit within the ecclesiastical administration where the ministers and officials must conform to orthodox practice and doctrine.⁸⁶ In the case of civil administrators, Althusius does not present similar explicit requirements.⁸⁷ However, this does

⁸² For an extensive analysis of the ethical underpinnings and requirements of works and offices in Althusius' *Politica*, see Katharina Odermatt, “Konfessionelle Einflüsse auf das Berufs- und Amtsverständnis in Althusius' “Politica””, in Strohm and de Wall, *Konfessionalität und Jurisprudenz in der frühen Neuzeit*.

⁸³ Althusius, *Politica*, VII § 40. See also § 19, 23–25, 30–32.

⁸⁴ Althusius, *Politica*, VII § 41; XXXII § 44.

⁸⁵ Althusius, *Politica methodice*, VII § 41: “Quando vero extranei fideles, prudentes, ingeniosi, & Reipublica nostrae utiles esse possunt, ad aliquam Reipartem, atque adeo in senatum etiam sunt admittendi.”

⁸⁶ Althusius, *Politica*, VIII § 19, 38; XVIII § 100–101; XXVIII § 31, 69.

⁸⁷ Althusius, *Politica*, VII § 45–49; XVIII § 60.

not mean a complete detachment from the religious aspect, since in matters of the soul the civil magistrate is subject to the ecclesiastical administration (and vice versa).⁸⁸ As we have seen, heretics generally face the threat of excommunication from the Church, but as I have suggested, this does not necessarily mean expulsion from the civil community.

Unfortunately, Althusius does not make a general statement concerning the fate of an office holder who is a heretic or confesses another religion. However, more can be said specifically of the office of the supreme magistrate (the ruler of the commonwealth) to which, among other qualifications, “an atheist, an impious or wicked man, or one who is a stranger to true and orthodox religion should not be elected.”⁸⁹ While there should be a regard for piety and virtue, the fact that supreme magistrates have been elected for mundane reasons does not make those elections invalid.⁹⁰ Furthermore, since elections are not always free but subject to the fundamental laws of a particular realm, e.g., to hereditary succession, it can happen that the prince called to rule the commonwealth is not of the true religion. In such a case he is to be instructed in the true religion, and if this cannot be done, he will be required to grant exercise of the true religion to the members of the realm.⁹¹ In conclusion it seems to me that there clearly is a general preference to elect pious and just officials, but at the same time the mere fact that an official is not of the true religion does not make the person unfit for a civil office.

4 Conclusion

Drawing together the different strands of the analysis I make the following final conclusions. Religious toleration is not really an ingredient of Althusius’s political theory. Althusius recommends religious tolerance only for prudential reasons, that is, when the public practice of false religions cannot be eradicated without risking the peace and survival of the commonwealth, and consequently, the mission of the faithful to live a holy life within it. In such a situation territorial separation of different religions seems a desirable solution.

The sanctity of the inner thoughts and beliefs, which Althusius promotes, does not amount to real religious tolerance, because wrong thoughts and beliefs

⁸⁸ Althusius, *Politica*, VII § 32; XXVIII § 48.

⁸⁹ Althusius, *Politica*, XIX § 73: “Non tamen eligendus erit atheus, impius, sceleratus, & a vera religione orthodoxa alienus: ...” (Althusius, *Politica methodice*, XIX § 73).

⁹⁰ Althusius, *Politica*, XIX § 73.

⁹¹ Althusius, *Politica*, XIX § 87.

cannot be publicly expressed. Nevertheless, there is no denying that Jews, Papists, and mild heretics can be tolerated, that is, when they keep their thoughts and beliefs private. But in such a case they are tolerated in a sense that is rather civil than religious. They can participate in the various functions of civil life – including potentially even full citizenship and civil office – but not in ecclesiastical life.

However, the toleration in the civil sphere is not boundless. First, the faithful are instructed to keep social distance from the non-members of the true religion, which can develop into extensive political and legal segregation of the latter, if the members of the true religion constitute the citizenry and use the discretionary power prescribed to the citizenry to enforce religious unity. There is no necessity for such outcome, just a possibility. Second, it is necessary for all members of the civil community to comply with the minimum requirement of the decent way of living. On the one hand, the normative framework for social life in every human community is given with the objective normative order expressed in the common law – particularly in the Decalogue – which excludes severe heretics, atheists, and other ungodly persons altogether from common life. On the other hand, the *censura* is tasked to enforce common morals in the commonwealth and the ecclesiastical administration to teach the word of God even for the unfaithful. This means that the civil sphere and the private religious sphere allowed for the tolerated are not free from intervention from the public power attending to both the good of the soul as well as body of the subjects.

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Maria Joana Gomes

Chapter 10

How to Translate Religious Concepts? Answers from Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Medieval Iberian Historians

Introduction

Language and religion are intricately intertwined. In the case of what can be called, not totally unproblematically,¹ the three monotheisms – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – questions of translatability and untranslatability have been discussed regarding the sacred texts of each religion.² Translation was part of the larger debate on the feasibility of understanding the Other, be it by embracing it or by denying it.³ We need, moreover, to consider not only the relationship between language and religion, but also that between translation and religion. Translation can be one way of looking at the debates of today regarding the possibility of a true understanding of different religious practices and beliefs.

In her recent article concerning interreligious dialogue, Marianne Moyaert has described the existence of two antagonistic positions vis-à-vis this issue: on the one hand, we have a “pluralistic” view of religion which postulates that “religious identity implies an openness for religious otherness. What is religiously meaningful is not to be sought in the provincialism of one’s own religious tradition, but rather in what transcends that tradition, namely ultimate Re-

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1 Ryan Szpiech, “Introduction,” in *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference: Commentary, Conflict, and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean*, ed. Ryan Szpiech (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 12–13.

2 Lynne Long, ed., *Translation and Religion: Holy Untranslatable?* (Clevedon, North Somerset: Multilingual Matters, 2005).

3 Michael P. DeJonge and Christiane Tietz, “Introduction,” in *Translating Religion: What Is Lost and Gained?*, ed. Michael P. DeJonge and Christiane Tietz (London: Routledge, 2015), 1–12.

ality.”⁴ On the other hand we have the “post-liberal particularists,” who draw attention to the value of identity and to the existence of an “irreducible difference between the religious languages.”⁵ This pair of opposites reflects George Steiner’s “universalist” and “monadist” views on translation,⁶ meaning that for “post-liberal particularists,” the untranslatability of religions (or its languages) is a *fait accompli*. Not surprisingly, the pluralist presents religious traditions “as different translations of one and the same ultimate reality,” meaning that differences in belief are merely superficial.⁷

It is within this debate that the question this paper poses lie: did medieval historians and translators hold the view that certain religious specificities were untranslatable? I aim to find out whether this can be answered by disclosing methods and procedures used by medieval Iberian historians (and translators) who were faced with the possibility of translating concepts and practices from a different religion than their own and of their audience. I will consider religion to be part of the wider group of culture-specific phenomena,⁸ and religious vocabulary and concepts a subset of what translation theorists have defined as culture-specific concepts.⁹ I will develop my analysis by making use of two theories of translation as a conceptual grid: *skopos* theory, developed by Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer,¹⁰ and that of *cultural translation*, elaborated by Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere.¹¹ To these, I will add the notion of ‘passage’ that was forged a few years ago by Matthias Tischler to replace the more common notion of

4 Marianne Moyaert, “The (Un-)Translatability of Religions? Ricoeur’s Linguistic Hospitality as Model for Interreligious Dialogue,” *Exchange. Journal of Missiological and Ecumenical Research* 37 (2008): 338.

5 Moyaert, “The (Un-)Translatability of Religions,” 338.

6 George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 137–139.

7 A view that very much reflects Nicholas of Cusa’s readings and commentaries on the *Alkoranus Latinus*, summed up in the phrase “one religion various rites.”

8 Christiane Norton, *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2018), 112–113.

9 Mona Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 22–25.

10 From *skopos* theory, I retain the notion of the importance of the norms conditioning both the producer and the receptor, and the idea that each translation depends on the function that translation has for the translator himself and for readers (Katharina Reiß and Hans Vermeer, *Towards a General Theory of Translational Action: Skopos Theory Explained*, trans. Christiane Nord (London: Routledge, 2014), 53).

11 I adhere to the view that all translations are in fact also extra-linguistic processes that are cultural and social enterprises (Susan Bassnett, “Culture and Translation,” in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. Piotr Kuhiwczak and Karin Littau (Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2007), 13).

‘transference,’ because it reflects more accurately the circumstances of cultural communication in the medieval world.¹²

My inquiry will be based on some material provided by Latin and Romance historiographical texts produced in the Iberian Peninsula in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, directly or indirectly linked to kings of Castile and Portugal. I will also pay attention to manuscript tradition when relevant. The choice for medieval Iberia was motivated by the fact that, in this territory, individuals pertaining to one of the three monotheistic denominations – Christianity, Islam, and Judaism – were in permanent contact with each other, causing hate or friendship, revulsion or fascination: they lived their lives close enough, but not always in a blissful state of idyllic “Convivencia.”¹³ But precisely because of this situation, and just like territories with similar characteristics in the Mediterranean, medieval Iberia became one of the centres for translation in the Middle Ages.¹⁴ Members of different religious communities interacted in a multilingual context, many knowing more than one language,¹⁵ and profited intellectually from that contact.

What at first sight might look less defensible is choosing to base the study of these translators’ practices and perceptions on historiographical works and not on the religious polemical literature, scriptural exegesis, or translations of religious books, which, at a glance, would seem to be a more obvious choice,

12 Matthias Tischler, “Spaces of ‘Convivencia’ and Spaces of Polemic: Transcultural Historiography and Religious Identity in the Intellectual Landscape of the Iberian Peninsula (9th–10th Centuries),” in *Historiography and Identity IV: Writing History across Medieval Eurasia*, ed. Walter Pohl and Daniel Mahoney, CELAMA 30 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 276–277.

13 David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015). However, the vicinity was key in shaping literary perceptions and expressions of the religious Other which contrasted with the views espoused by Northern Europe literature, where the representation of Muslims and Jews as monstrous creatures was abundant (Debra Higgins Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 9).

14 A good summary regarding the existence or not of a ‘school’ in Toledo can be found in Matthias Maser, *Die Historia Arabum des Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada. Arabische Traditionen und die Identität der Hispania im 13. Jahrhundert. Studie – Übersetzung – Kommentar* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006), 49–68.

15 Yasmine Beale-Rivaya, “Ethnic and Linguistic Pluralisms in Medieval Toledo,” in *Revisiting the Convivencia in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, edited by Connie L. Scarborough (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta-Hispanic Monographs, 2014), 337–403; Daniel König, “Latin-Arabic Entanglement: A Short History,” in *Latin and Arabic: Entangled Histories*, ed. Daniel G. König (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2019), 56–68.

since this type of literature is in the forefront of the expression of religious perceptions of those communities.¹⁶

I defend my option for medieval historiography with the following arguments: first, religious polemics and translations of religious works have been more thoroughly scrutinized concerning the presence and function of religious vocabulary, concepts, and terminology than historiographical texts.¹⁷ Second, historiographers, religious polemicists, and translators often worked within the same milieu (when they were not the same individual), and intertextuality was rife.¹⁸ Researching the practice of translating religion in historical texts might help to shed light on several issues, such as similarities and differences across genres, the relationship between polemical discourse and historical texts, or the processes of rewriting these texts. Historians often resorted to translations to render their texts richer in information and as a means to combat their “political” enemies.¹⁹ Third, each translation tells a unique story, dictated by context and purpose.²⁰ Studying practices of translating religion in historiography will provide a better understanding of the knowledge of this vocabulary by the receptors of these texts.

Finally, I believe that by looking at medieval attempts at translating concepts or terms pertaining to a specific religion into another language, one can find some answers to issues at stake in contemporary debate about religious identity(ies) and universality, about interfaith and interreligious dialogue, as well as to obstacles and limitations of some of the most widely used operative concepts in this field.²¹

16 Szpiech, “Introduction,” 2.

17 Two exceptions: Matthias Tischler, “Translation-Based Chronicles, Twelfth to Thirteenth Centuries: New Sources for the Arabo-Latin Translation Movement in the Iberian Peninsula,” *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 1:2 (2014): 175–218 and Matthias Tischler, “Spaces of ‘Convivencia.’”

18 See Ana Echevarría, “La reescritura del *Libro de la escala de Mahoma* como polémica religiosa,” *Cahiers d’études hispaniques médiévales* 29 (2006): 173–199; Tischler “Spaces,” 285.

19 Maser, *Die Historia Arabum*, 296–300; Tischler, “Spaces,” 277–293.

20 Joaquín Rubio Tovar, “Algunas características de las traducciones medievales,” *Revista de Literatura Medieval* 9 (1997): 236–237.

21 Hephzibah Israel, “Translation and Religion: Crafting Regimes of Identity,” *Religion* 49:3 (2019): 339; Matthias Tischler, “De la imposibilidad de escribir una historia sobre la percepción de las ‘religiones’ en la Alta y Plena Edad Media,” in *Christentum in der Neuzeit. Geschichte – Religion – Mission – Mystik. Festschrift für Mariano Delgado zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Michael Sievernich and Klaus Vellguth (Freiburg: Herder, 2020), 155–173.

1 Early Medieval Iberian Historiography and Arabic Translations

Be it by narrating events from a distant past or from a more recent present, medieval Iberian historiographers spoke abundantly about occurrences and events in which Christians, Muslims and Jews communities interacted with one another. Their works sometimes differed from the religious polemics, for the main concern of most historians seems to have been the narration, description, or commentaries concerning events rather than weaving a theological argumentative discourse on religious truth and the falsity of the Other. But that does not amount to saying that these sorts of texts were not used by medieval historians, nor that historians did not concern themselves with writing polemical treatises.²²

Arabic historical works circulated in the Peninsula since the early days of the Islamic presence, and they were used as sources of information by Christian historians from the eighth century onwards. Among the earliest examples we can point to the *Byzantine-Arabic Chronicle*, the *Mozarabic Chronicle of 754*, which used Arabic sources, either oral or written.²³ Codices containing the *Chronica Prophetica* copied a century and a half later contain many examples of polemical literature against Islam and Judaism.²⁴

With the acceleration of the expansion of the northern Christian kingdoms to the south (the phenomenon inaccurately named the ‘Reconquista’), and the conquest of important Arabic cities in the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, such as Toledo (1085), Cordova (1236), and Seville (1248), Latin and Romance culture gained unprecedented access to Arab culture and science. Twelfth-century translators devoted themselves mainly to translating scientific works, but *Chronica Pseudo-Isidoriana*, written in the early days of this century, most likely in Toledo, also used Arabic texts as sources.²⁵ The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw a rise in the translation of Arabic chronicles and other texts and a subsequent incorporation of those texts in Latin and Vulgar historiographical writing. One of the most striking historiographical projects of this time regarding this aspect is Rodrigo de Rada’s *De Rebus Hispaniae*.

²² See previous section.

²³ Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, “The Textual Transmission of the *Mozarabic Chronicle of 754*,” *Early Medieval Europe* 8:1 (2003): 16. Michelina Di Cesare, *The Pseudo-Historical Image of the Prophet Muhammad in Medieval Latin Literature: A Repertory* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 12–15.

²⁴ Tischler, “Spaces,” 283–284.

²⁵ Tischler, “Translation-based chronicles”, 178–183.

2 Equivalences: The Khalifa and the Pope

There is no question how powerful Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada was. He not only had high religious credentials, but lineage and, as chancellor of King Alfonso VIII, considerable power and prestige.²⁶ Rodrigo was also a man of culture: he combined a keen interest in historiography and in Arabic culture, not necessarily for the best of reasons.²⁷ He presided over a circle of clerics and translators who worked with Arabic texts. To one of them, Mark of Toledo, Rodrigo commissioned a full translation of the Qu'ran into Latin (1211–1212), the second to appear after Robert Ketton's,²⁸ and the treatises of Ibn Tūmart, the founder of the Almohads.²⁹

Rodrigo de Rada's ambitious historiographical project began in 1214, when he wrote the *Breviarium Historiae Catholicae*. Three decades later he was fully committed to writing a history of Spain, each volume of his *Historia* telling the story of the ruling of the Iberian Peninsula by different peoples: besides *Historia Arabum*, a *Historia Romanorum*, a *Historia Ostrogothorum*, and most important of all, the *Historia de Rebus Hispaniae sive Historia Gothica*. Completed in 1243, it told the story of the Goths from their arrival in Spain to Ferdinand III, to whom this work is dedicated.

While *Historia Arabum* was largely based on an Arab historical compilation and on a *Sirat* of the Prophet, *De Rebus Hispaniae*'s Arab sources included charters, chronicles, and the Hadith.³⁰ In Book VII, *De Rebus Hispaniae* describes the foundation of the Almoadan sect and how Ibn Tūmart began his political career by contesting both the rulers of the Maghreb, the Almoravids, and the authority of the Khalifa of Baghdad:

In his diebus autem huius Adelfonsi imperatoris [Alfonso VII] surrexit apud Arabes uir quidam nomine Auentumerth homo in astronomia et naturalibus ualde doctus. ... Auentu-

²⁶ Maser, *Die Historia Arabum*, 2–40.

²⁷ Lucy Pick, *Conflict and Coexistence: Archbishop Rodrigo and the Muslims and Jews of Medieval Spain* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Matthias Maser, "Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada and His *Historia Arabum*, an Extraordinary Example of Inter-cultural Tolerance?," in *Languages of Love and Hate: Conflict, Communication, and Identity in the Medieval Mediterranean*, ed. Sarah Lambert and Helen Nicholson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 223–238.

²⁸ Marie Thérèse d'Alverny, "Deux traductions latines du Coran au moyen âge," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 16 (1948): 61–131.

²⁹ Marie Thérèse d'Alverny and Georges Vajda, "Marc de Tolède: Traducteur d'Ibn Tūmart," *al-Andalus* 16 (1951): 100–140.

³⁰ John Tolan, *Sons of Ishmael: Muslims through European Eyes* (Florida: Florida University Press, 2008), 168, note 29.

merth [Ibn Tūmart] autem asciuit quendam, qui Almohadi uocabatur et erat in Machometi doctrina ualde peritus, et cepit librum Machometi, qui dicitur Alchoranus, expoenere et docere et caliphe de Baldac, qui est papa Arabum et descendit generationis linea de semine Machometi, contraria predicare, similiter contra Almoravides, qui tunc culmen regni in Affrica optinebant, rebellia adhortari.³¹

I would like to focus my attention on the relative clause *qui est papa Arabum et descendit generationis linea de semine Machometi*. There is little doubt that this whole section must be a commentary introduced by the translators, for it would be strange indeed if a text written by Muslims and for Muslims would invoke the figure of the pope to explain what a khalifa was. At the same time, this passage does not give any piece of information about who Muḥammad was, possibly because his story was told in detail in the *Historia Arabum*.³²

Looking closer at the elements of the clause, we can divide them into two: *qui est papa Arabum* and *descendit generationis linea de semine Machometi*. Even if we can assume that in most cases this form of equivalence was based on a misconception of the political and religious functions of both figures, that might not be the case here. Rodrigo de Rada went further than merely using a metaphorical correspondence between the Christian pope and the Islamic khalifa, he also adds a description of what he sees as similar and what he sees as different.

The equivalence is facilitated by the notion of ‘succession,’ since ‘Calipha’ literally means the ‘successor’ or the ‘representative’ and Christians saw the pope as the successor of Peter. Other Christian authors also found this correspondence useful to explain the political and religious functions of the khalifa.³³

31 Juan Valverde, ed., “De rebus Hispaniae sive Historia gothica,” in *CCCM 72, Roderici Ximenii Opera omnia. Pars I* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1987), VII, cap. X, 1–14. “In the days of Emperor Alfonso, there appeared among the Arabs someone called Aventumerth, a man versed in astronomy and in the natural sciences. ... Aventumerth also rose to be the one who was called Almohadi. He was an expert in the doctrine of Muḥammad, and he began to explain and teach the book of Muḥammad, which is called al-Qur’an and began preaching against the Calipha of Baghdad, who is the pope of the Arabs and descends from the seed of Muḥammad, and he began to instigate rebellions against the Almoravids, who by then had power over the kingdoms of Africa” [my translation]. According to the editor’s notes, the manuscript traditions do not conserve any variants of this passage.

32 Juan Fernández Valverde, ed., “Historia Arabum,” in *CCCM 72, Roderici Ximenii Opera omnia. Pars III* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 88–96, Chapters I–VI.

33 Thomas W. Arnold, *The Caliphate* (London: Clarendon Press, 1924), 168–170.

In the same manner, many Muslim intellectuals also returned to the same metaphorical correspondence, albeit in a reversed way.³⁴

But Rodrigo was aware that this equivalence was not exact. The sentence *descendit generationis linea de semine Machometi* aims at stating the difference regarding the legitimate transmission of authority of the khalifa and the pope: the khalifa is the successor of Muḥammad by blood. This sets him apart from the pope, whose connection to Peter is merely spiritual.³⁵ Even if this equivalence was deemed imperfect, presenting the khalifa as an equivalent of the pope aimed at facilitating the comprehension by Christian readers of some of the religious-political characteristics of the function of the khalifa.

Another important feature of this excerpt is how it portrays the actions of Ibn Tūmart, showing him as a rebel against established political authorities (against the khalifa and the Almoravids), which can only be understood as negative, even more so if we consider the fact that the Archbishop of Toledo ascribes the same behaviour to Muḥammad, who is presented as a rebel against Rome in the *Historia Arabum*.³⁶ Therefore, even if the text does not mention the claim of a genealogical connection to the Prophet by Ibn Tūmart and it is not marked by the denigratory language that characterizes polemical discourse, Rodrigo de Rada places him under a 'genealogy' of rebellion. Thus, this type of political action reflects a negative ethical behaviour that becomes a staple of Muslim polity, which can be invoked to legitimize further conquests or religious and political suppression.

3 Loan Word and the Opening of Religious/Linguistic Spaces: *Axarea*

Since the studies of Galmés de Fuentes, we know that the influence of Arabic on medieval Castilian prose is deep, resulting in a strong influence on the syntax of the new emerging Iberian vernacular languages, such as Castilian, Catalan, and Galician-Portuguese,³⁷ but also on Latin.³⁸ The infinite possibilities of morpho-

³⁴ Daniel König, *Arabic Islamic Views of the Latin West: Tracing the Emergence of Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 260–263.

³⁵ Ibn Tūmart also claimed to be a descendant of Muḥammad.

³⁶ John Tolan, *Saracens* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 185.

³⁷ Álvaro Galmés de Fuentes, *Influencias sintácticas y estilísticas del árabe en la prosa medieval castellana* (Madrid: Gredos, 1996); Carlos Heusch, "Penser la traduction au Moyen Âge. Problèmes et perspectives," *Cahiers d'études hispaniques médiévales* 41 (2018): 11. As far as I

logical derivation in Arabic also influenced the creation of new ways of deriving words (mostly in sapiential texts) and adding new words to the language by loan names for things or concepts (mostly scientific texts).³⁹ In historiography, however, translated historiographical texts seem to have very few loan words from Arabic, the most obvious being toponyms or proper names.

Translated Arabic historiographical sources continued under King Alfonso the Wise (1255–1284). One can never stress enough the importance of the Arabic translations made under Alfonso's reign on the scientific, philosophical developments of Spanish culture, even if this project was motivated for less noble reasons than access to knowledge.⁴⁰ Arabic sources played an equally relevant role in his historiographical work, be it in Alfonso's incomplete *magnus opus*, the *General Estoria* (1284), or in the two versions of *Estoria de España*, namely *Versión Primitiva* (1270–1274) and *Versión Crítica* (1282–1284).⁴¹

During the reign of his son, Sancho IV (1284–1289), Alfonso's *Versión Primitiva* was rewritten, and it is known today as *Versión Amplificada* or *Sanchina*. One of the most important sources of this text is the lost chronicle of the fall of Valencia in Ibn 'Alqama's work, the *Al Bayān al-wāḍih fī al-mulimm al-fāḍih* ("The Clear Exposition of the Disastrous Tragedy").

In a passage narrating the journey of Ibn Hudd, King of Denia and Tortosa, to conquer Valencia, *Versión Amplificada* tells us that he stops at a very specific place to rest: "et poso en un lugar que era un oratorio o los moros fazien oracion en sus fiestas, et dizienle en su arabigo *axarea*."⁴² *Axarea* (الشارع), or *šārī'a*, which in Modern Standard Arabic means 'large open space,' 'avenue,' is in fact an Iberian-Moroccan synonym for *muṣalla* (مُصَلًى), 'a place for praying,' where collective prayers took place, in many cases in times of drought. In Valencia, like in other

know, there are no systematic studies of these types of influence on medieval Galician-Portuguese.

38 D'Alverny and Vajda, "Marc de Tolède," 107–108.

39 Georg Bosson, "Creatividad lingüística en las traducciones alfonsíes del árabe," *Alcanate: Revista de estudios Alfonsíes* 6 (2008–2009): 25–37.

40 Luis Miguel Vicente, *Remote Origins: Translation, Genealogy, and Alterity in Medieval Castile (1252–circa 1390)* (PhD dissertation, Michigan University, 2021), 21–27.

41 Inés Fernández Ordoñez, *Las 'estorias' Alfonso el Sabio* (Madrid: ISTMO, 1992), 173–192. Alfonso even offers critical reflections regarding the usage of Arabic sources that he seems to have valued above other sources written in his own language.

42 Ramón Mendenéz Pidal, ed., *Primera Crónica General de España*, vol. 2 (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1977), cap. 880, p. 551b. "He stopped at a place which was an oratory where the Moors prayed in their celebrations and was called in their Arabic *axarea*" [my translation]. The author does not indicate any omission of this passage in the manuscript tradition. *Crónica de Castilla* also presents the same explanation with minor changes.

eastern Andalusian cities, there was a door named *bāb al- šārī'a* (the gate of open field), and a large open field close to it.⁴³

It is possible that this information came from an oral source.⁴⁴ If this information comes from the written text, it is very likely that the source only referred to *axarea*, and that the additional explanatory paraphrase of its meaning (*que era un oratorio o los moros fazien oracion en sus fiestas*), as well as the indication of the change of language (*et dizienle en su arabigo*) were added by the translators. This shows an awareness that this specific place for prayer was characteristic of Islam and did not find a suitable correspondence in the Target Language. Thus, the translators opted to introduce a loan word, dutifully accompanied by an elucidation of its meaning. This habit of explaining certain words and concepts can be found throughout the text and does not limit itself to religious vocabulary.⁴⁵

Another striking feature of this passage is that the other versions of *Estoria de España* have a different rendition of the events. The *Versión Crítica*, which is the closest to *Versión Primitiva*,⁴⁶ does not present the word *axarea*, nor does it seem to be aware of the religious status of the place visited by Ibn Hudd: “Aben-hut moro en Xatiua ya quantos dias, desi guisose para yr sobre Valençia cuydando la aver, ca sopo que los del pueblo estauan mal con su señor. E quando llego a Valençia parosse en un lugar que le veyen los de la çibdad, e andudo aderredor del muro.”⁴⁷

43 Leopoldo Torres Balbas, “‘muşalla’ y ‘šārī’a’ en las ciudades hispanomusulmanas” (*Crónica Arqueologica de la España Muçulmana* 22), *Al-Andalus* 13 (1948): 168–173.

44 Tischler, “Translation-Based Chronicles,” 196, lists several forms of the verb ‘dicere’ used in the narrative as a proof of orality.

45 See the explanation of the meaning of ‘diarrhoea,’ present in the *Versión Sanchina* but absent in the *Versión Primitiva* (Mariano de la Campa Gutiérrez, “La *Versión Primitiva* de la *Estoria de España* de Alfonso x: Edición crítica,” in *Actas del XIII Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas*, ed. Florencio Sevilla Arroyo and Carlos Alvar, vol. 1 (Madrid: Castalia, 2000), 65).

46 Mariano de la Campa Gutiérrez, “La *Estoria de España* de Alfonso X: Los reinados de Sancho III, Fernando II y Alfonso VIII,” *e-Spania* 25 (2016): 11. We do not have direct testimonies of the *Versión Primitiva* for this part, so we have to rely on indirect testimonies (see Inés Fernández Ordóñez, “La transmisión textual de la ‘Estoria de Espanna’ y de las principales ‘Crónicas’ de ella derivadas,” in *Alfonso el Sabio y las crónicas de España*, ed. Inés Fernández-Ordóñez (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, Centro para la Edición de los Clásicos Españoles, 2000), 219–260).

47 Mariano de la Campa, ed., *La Estoria de España de Alfonso X: Estudio y edición de la “Versión crítica” desde Fruela II hasta la muerte de Fernando II* (Málaga: Analecta Malacitana, 2009), 510, cap. CCCI, “Ibn Hudd stayed in Xativa for some days; then, thinking that he could conquer Valencia because the people were on bad terms with their ruler, he prepared himself to go to Va-

The use of a loan word is not only a way of explaining to readers about a specific space which is used by another religious community for communal prayer but might also have been intended as a means to give more authority to the correction of the *Versión Primitiva* of the *Estoria de España* (if we accept that the lesson of *Versión Crítica* is closer to the *Versión Primitiva*).

4 Shared Heritage and Literal Translation: The ‘Son of Mary’

The last example I would like to mention points in a slightly different direction than the previous two. This is not an attempt to explain an unknown concept by comparison or equivalence, or a loan word from the Source Language to the Target Language. This is a case where literal translation opens up new interpretations potentiated mostly by cultural differences in the context of the reception of the original text and its translation. I argue that the use of literal translation can have two contradictory consequences: it might open up a space for religious controversy, but it can also be read as common ground in which two distinct religious communities, Muslims and Christians, can converge.

The expression I am thinking of can be found in the fourteenth-century Galician-Portuguese text known today as *Crónica de 1344* (C1344), written by Pedro of Barcelos, the illegitimate son of King Dionis of Portugal. One of the sources used by Pedro to write his C1344 is *Crónica do Mouro Rasis* (CMR), a Galician-Portuguese translation of an eleventh- or twelfth-century Arabic version of the tenth-century chronicle known as *Akhbar Muluk al-Andalus*, written in Cordova by the historian Ahmad al-Razi.⁴⁸ The translation from the Arabic to the Galician-Portuguese text was made by an identified team of two translators, a Christian cleric called Gil Peres, and a Muslim named Muhammad al-‘Arif, both working under the patronage of King Dionis of Portugal.⁴⁹ Due to the very

lencia. And when he arrived, he stopped in a place from where those in the city could see him and he circulated around the walls” [my translation]. This passage is not completely conserved in the main manuscript due to homoioteleuton, but it is attested by other testimonies.

48 António Rei, *Memória de espaços e espaços de memória: De Al-Razi a D. Pedro de Barcelos* (Lisbon: Colibri, 2008).

49 Diego Catalán and María Soledad Andrés, eds., *Crónica del moro Rasis, versión del ajbār mulūk al-andalus de Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn mūsā al-rāzī, 889–955; romanizada para el rey don dionís de portugal hacia 1300 por mahomad alarife, y gil pérez, clérigo de don perianes porçel* (Madrid: Seminario Menéndez Pidal, 1975), XIII. He based his argument on a seventeenth-century manuscript kept in Copenhagen, which directly mentions the Portuguese king.

fragmentary manuscript tradition of all these texts, it is hard to trace when changes or adaptations occurred.⁵⁰

In the section dedicated to emirs of al-Andalus, *C1344* discusses the rule of one of them, a prince called Cabat, who governed this territory before the arrival of the Syrian Umayyads to the Iberian Peninsula. While speaking to a crowd, and to justify the killing of a group of men, Cabat refers to those under his rule, distinguishing Muslims from Christians. He then defines Christians in the following way: “E Dios e vos otros quesistes ansi que non ovo otro de rreinar e de mandar los moros de España e todos los que creen por el fijo de Maria.”⁵¹

I have treated this specific passage in previous papers, where I called attention to the influence of Arabic in syntactic form, ‘creed por.’⁵² While I will not delve into the strictly linguistic aspect of this passage again, I would like to retain here some of my previous observations concerning the use of the expression ‘the son of Mary,’ a literal translation of the Arabic ‘Ibn Maryam,’ and one of the most common ways of naming Jesus in the Islamic tradition.⁵³

Besides being in accordance with Arabic onomastics, describing Jesus’s maternal genealogical background has been explained by some medieval Islamic exegetes as one way of assuring Jesus’s merits (being born without a father), as well being a fact.⁵⁴ But this form of tracing Jesus’s ancestry is also tainted with other implications: it is a form of denying or, at the very least, hiding the divine paternity of Jesus, his status as ‘the son of God,’⁵⁵ but mostly and foremost

50 Catalán, *Crónica del moro Rasis*, CIII.

51 Diego Catalán and Maria Soledad Andrés, eds., *Edición crítica del texto español de la Crónica de 1344* (Madrid: Seminario Menéndez Pidal, 1971), 170: “... and God and you [the subjects the king is addressing] wanted it in such a way that no other ought to govern and rule the Moors of Spain and those who believe in the son of Mary” [my translation].

52 Maria Joana Gomes, “From Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Mūsa al-Rāzī to Mouro Rasis: Translation and Cultural Dialogue in Medieval Iberia,” *Philological Encounters* 2:1/2 (2017): 64; Maria Joana Gomes, “Tradução e polifonia na literatura medieval: O caso da Crónica do Mouro Rasis,” in *Vozes e letras: Polifonia e subjectividade na literatura portuguesa antiga*, ed. Tobias Brandenberger and Maria Ana Ramos (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2019), 65–66.

53 Oddbjørn Leirvik, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2010), 23.

54 Asma Afsarudin, “The Messiah ‘Isa, Son of Mary’: Jesus in the Islamic Tradition,” in *Nicholas of Cusa and Islam: Polemic and Dialogue in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Ian Christopher Levy, Rita George-Tvrtković, and Donald Duclow (Leuven: Brill, 2020), 186–187.

55 This view, central to the dogma of the Trinity, was held by Christian communities since the early days of Christianity (Matthew 14:33, 27:43; Luke 1:35) and was formally recognized in the Council of Nicea of 325, gaining ground among medieval theologians and philosophers. It has been explicitly rejected by Islam, as stated in the *Sūrah An-Nisā*, 4:171 and *Sūrah al Al-Mā'idah*, 5:72–75 and 9–30.

what this divine ancestry implied is that Jesus was himself divine, a view completely rejected by Muslims.⁵⁶

I have discussed elsewhere the semantic implications of referring to Jesus as ‘the son of Mary’ in a text that was intended to be circulated among a Christian audience. It seemed to me that the translators of the Arabic chronicle appeared to be untroubled by this designation, and I have interpreted its maintenance in the translated text either as a sign that the translators might have been oblivious to its cultural and religious resonance for their community, or that they, even though one of them was a cleric, did not feel inclined to change the text to bring it closer to the religious adherences of a Christian community. That might have happened because they were translating literally (*ad verbum*).⁵⁷ I can add that, if this was the case, faithfulness to the source text was the translators’ main concern. It could reflect a willingness to render historical truth accurately, here seen (deliberately or unconsciously) as indistinct from the discourse, or to mirror a very respectful attitude towards the source text’s authoritative lesson,⁵⁸ but it could, on the other hand, just be a sign of an incapacity to render the text in a more fluid way.⁵⁹

A few more thoughts on this short yet fascinating segment of text can be added to the previous ideas: possibly Gil Peres and Muhammad al-’Arif and their audience recognized and accepted ‘the son of Mary’ to be a valid reference to Jesus, since it does not contradict (at least explicitly) the Christian views on Christ. Thus, the underlying potential problem in translating this expression is not that it transfers an unknown religious concept from one community to another, as in the previous cases we have seen. In this case, literal translation is useful because it establishes a religious common ground linked to the figure of Christ, who belonged to both Christian and Islamic traditions since the early days of both faiths.

56 Mahmoud Ayoub, “Jesus the Son of God: A Study of the Terms ‘Ibn’ and ‘Walad’ in the Qur’an and Tafsir Tradition,” in Mahmoud Ayoub, *A Muslim View of Christianity: Essays on Dialogue*, ed. Irfan A. Omar. Faith Meets Faith Series (New York: Obris Books, 2007), 122. Some Muslim commentators read ‘the son of God’ as a spiritual filiation rather than a biological one (Ayoub, “Jesus the son of God,” 124–125).

57 Gomes, “From Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad,” 64–65.

58 Felipe Maíllo Salgado, “Hibridación y calcos en las fuentes literarias castellanas de la Baja Edad Media. Contribución al estudio del medioevo español y al de su léxico,” *Miscelánea de estudios árabes y hebraicos* xxix–xxx (1980–1981) : 91–105.

59 Tovar, “Algunas características,” 223.

5 Conclusion

The examples presented in this paper are illustrative of how some religious features of Islam were treated by translators of Arabic texts. By resorting to different techniques (paraphrasis, loan, calque) they showed a belief in the possibility of offering to their readers a glimpse of an unfamiliar reality through translation.

Concerning the vision of Islam, these examples seem to suggest that the influence of religious polemical discourse was perhaps more noticeable in earlier chronicles. This may be because they use more Arabic historical texts as sources for their translations, or because intellectual combat against Islam took new forms,⁶⁰ or because historical conditions gave Christians the upper hand in the Peninsula in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. By the mid-fourteenth century, Christians had conquered Cordova and many other important cities and had won the battle of Tarifa. Hence, Islam and Muslims were progressively becoming the object of a narrative dictated by Christian rulers and their intellectual entourages. Telling the stories of their military victories, narrating the troubles and conflicts lived by the Muslim rulers of Al-Andalus, while occasionally recalling theological differences through maintaining Arabic terminology might not have been the only way of battling the Other, but it was certainly an effective way of showing Christianity to be the true religion.

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⁶⁰ Alex Novikoff, "From Dialogue to Disputation in the Age of Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 4:1 (2012): 99–100.

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Part III: **Altruism**

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Chapter 11

From Charity to Rights: Theological and Legal Perspectives on Poor Relief in the Middle Ages

Introduction

It is estimated that about a third of the population lived below or close to the subsistence level in thirteenth-century Europe. The standard of living among ordinary people was generally low, so the effects of extreme conditions such as loss years, natural disasters, wars, and pandemics could easily lead to local and widespread distress and famine. The situation worsened on a larger scale especially in the early fourteenth century when Northern Europe faced the Great Famine (1315–1317) from northern Alpine Europe to Ireland and Russia. Thereafter, the Black Death (1346–1353) and ensuing recurrent plague pandemics reaped deaths until the fifteenth and even to the sixteenth centuries. Especially in times of crisis, hunger drove people to go from place to place and beg.¹

How was this need met at a time when there was no institutionalized social security? This chapter looks at the issue especially from the perspective of charity and rights in late medieval society. During this time, helping others was understood as a Christian duty and was motivated especially by the doctrine of charity and the salvation of the individual. This chapter draws critical attention to the ineffectiveness of medieval charity-based assistance to the poor and argues for the importance of early ideas of subsistence rights developed by thirteenth- and fourteenth-century canon lawyers and theologians. The main argument is that whereas charity-based relief focused mainly on the right intention and duties of almsgivers and donators, rights-based relief, which was directed

1 There are few statistics on absolute poverty from the Middle Ages. However, we know through archaeological findings that natural catastrophes and pandemics famine and caused population movements locally. See Michel Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages: An Essay in Social History*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 29; Bonnie L. Pattison, *Poverty in the Theology of Jean Calvin*. Princeton Theological Monograph Series (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2006), esp. Chapter 3. See also Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England c. 1200–1520*, rev. ed., Cambridge Medieval Textbook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

toward the poor and their individual rights to subsistence, was later able to pave the way for governmental social security systems based on social rights and justice.

The chapter is divided into six sections. The first section provides definitions of canon lawyers and theologians concerning the poor and poverty, showing the complexity of the concepts. The second section deals with charity-based poor relief that was mainly based on spiritually and doctrinally motivated ‘reciprocity’ between almsgivers and recipients. In the third section, poor relief is briefly connected to the economic sphere, namely, the close and interdependent relation between property and poverty. The fourth and fifth sections deal with rights-based poor relief at its very early stage and thus see developments mainly from a conceptual and theoretical point of view. These two sections also offer some examples from medieval Nordic laws. The sixth section concludes.

1 Who Were the Poor?

For the Christian communities of the fourth century, charity came to be understood as need-based and from then on, the ‘poor’ began to emerge as their own social group. It has even been argued that the bishops of the early Christian Church together with the Church Fathers invented the poor as a special category of people mainly based on Jewish traditions and the Hebrew Bible, in which poverty was understood as an identity and thus a basis for aid and charity.² As Peter Brown has shown, this Christian understanding of the poor and of need-based charity differentiated from the practices in the Roman Empire, where aid was traditionally based on recipients’ involvement as members of the community, such as a family or a city, not on their needs.³ These kinds of views, in turn, were influential among medieval canon lawyers and theologians when commenting on Gratian’s *Decretum* (ca. 1140), which contains a large number of citations from the Church Fathers.⁴ In the *Decretum*, the term *miserabiles personae* referred to

² Cf. Chapter 5 in this volume where Serafim Seppälä mentions that the second-century Eastern Church fathers presented the ethical ideal of the Sermon on the Mount as the norm of Christian behavior but at the same time presented Christians’ behavior with the same ethical idealism (e.g., bless when cursed, love when they are hated) by formatting their Christian identity under the Islamic rule in Abbasid times.

³ Peter Brown, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2001), 79–80.

⁴ For the question of Gratian and his role in the *Decretum*, see Anders Winroth, *The Making of Gratian’s Decretum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

a category of disadvantaged persons such as orphans, widows, the old, the poor, and disabled people, who were all victims of circumstances beyond their control and “whose freedom and material poverty left them solitary and on the edge of survival.”⁵ They were under special protection of church law and were considered worthy of charity.⁶ In fact, in the *Decretum*, the selective principle of charity was already based on the distinction between the worthy and the unworthy poor, whereas the unselective principle dealt with those in extreme need.⁷

There were, however, differences in the views of lawyers and theologians about definitions of the poor and destitute. The French canonist William Durand (ca. 1230–1296), for example, included non-wealthy and non-noble pupils, travelers, the unjustly oppressed, those who were without their own defense, the abandoned, former slaves, and so on.⁸ Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254) added to the list lepers, merchants, and pilgrims. A civil lawyer, Azo (ca. 1150–1250), for his part, gave the vague formulation that miserable persons were “all those whom nature moves us to pity.”⁹

Among theologians, the definition of the poor was generally vague, expressing the spiritual benefits and/or the social and moral degradation of their misery. In his *Rosarium*, Archdeacon Guido de Baysio (ca. 1246/56–1313) described the poor as follows: “Some are born poor and yet voluntarily suffer their poverty as part of the divine plan; some join themselves to the poor like apostles, who left all behind and followed Christ; and some are poor out of the ‘voracity of cupidity’; their poverty is called necessary.”¹⁰ Along the same lines, a German preacher, Berthold von Regensburg (1220–1272), mentioned in his *Sermones rusticani de domenici* three types of the poor: the damned, the saved, and the honored. According to him, the damned were those who were not content with their lot but blamed God for their misery, took unjust profit but gave little,

5 Janet Coleman, “Property and Poverty,” in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought*, c. 350–c. 1450, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 627.

6 See Richard Helmholz, *The Spirit of Classical Canon Law* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1966), Chapter 5 (116–144).

7 Brian Tierney, *Medieval Poor Law: A Sketch of Canonical Theory and Its Application in England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959).

8 Jonathan Robinson, “Poverty and Need in the 14th Century: Johannes Andreae, Bartolus of Saxoferrato, and Baldus de Ubaldis,” in *Rights at the Margins: Historical, Philosophical and Legal Perspectives*, ed. Virpi Mäkinen, Jonathan Robinson, Pamela Slotte, and Heikki Haara (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 65 (31–62).

9 Robert W. Shaffern, *Law and Justice from Antiquity to Enlightenment* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 132–133.

10 Cited in Robinson, “Poverty and Need,” 55–57.

or stole food and goods from others.¹¹ Both these theologians regarded poverty as a given state of being about which the poor should not complain but should be passively content. They also saw poverty either as a link to an immoral and criminal life at the expense of others or as a spiritually valuable state that would be rewarded in heaven, as the Sermon on the Mount explains: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3). It should also be noted that voluntary, religious poverty was highly valued in medieval society. In particular, the new mendicant orders, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, introduced the practice of begging for spiritual reasons. Their mendicancy was also criticized because they took alms from the poor, who were those in real need.¹²

2 Begging and Almsgiving: Official Parts of Poor Relief

In medieval society, poor relief was mainly under the responsibility of the church and religious institutions. Secular institutions such as guilds took responsibility for their own members, but also for the urban poor.¹³ Both from the ecclesiastical and from the secular perspective, the ultimate duty to help the needy rested on ordinary people’s benevolence, that is, on almsgiving and other donations. The common teaching among canon lawyers and theologians was that ‘superfluous’ wealth belonged to the needy. With the term ‘superfluous’ they meant the property that remained after one has provided for everyday necessities.¹⁴ However, only those who were found after examination to be deserving poor were given

11 See Jussi Hanska, “*And the Rich Man also Died; and He Was Buried in Hell*”: *The Social Ethos in Mendicant Sermons*. Bibliotheca historica 28 (Helsinki: The Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 1997), 114.

12 Andrew G. Traver, “William of Saint Amour’s Two Disputed Questions *De quantitate eleemosynae* and *De valido mendicante*,” *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* 62 (1995): 295–342. See also Andrew G. Traver, *The Identification of the ‘Vita Apostolica’ with a Life of Itinerant Preaching and Mendicancy: Its Origins, Adherents, and Critics ca. 1055–1266*, PhD dissertation (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996).

13 Steven Epstein, *Wage Labor and Guilds in Medieval Europe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991, 158; John Hendersson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Lars Bisgaard, Lars Boje Mortensen, and Tom Pettitt, eds., *Guilds, Towns and Cultural Transmission in the North, 1300–1500* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2013).

14 Elaine Clark, “Institutional and Legal Responses to Begging in Medieval England,” *Social Science History* 26:3 (2002): 451.

the privilege to beg, which usually concerned a certain place and a definite time period. Begging privileges could also be hereditary.¹⁵

The two main criteria for distinguishing between the worthy/deserving and unworthy/undeserving poor concerned the place of residence for assistance (also called the geographical criterion) and the ability to work.¹⁶ The distinction between the local/domestic and the foreign poor was also important for monitoring purposes. In the medieval period, the local poor were those who lived in the same village or the parish, whereas in the early modern age, locality might also referred to the same nation. Thus, a foreigner did not necessarily refer to someone coming from another country, for people from another village or city were also considered foreigners.¹⁷ Already in the patristic period, the criterion for the worthy poor (i. e., *miserabiles personae*) was the inability to sustain one's living by work or by the support of one's family and nearest relatives.¹⁸ From the theological point of view, work was also seen as a strong weapon against the vices of idleness and laziness. Therefore, work had an importance in the penitential point of view, as well.¹⁹ Both criteria were, of course, more theoretical than simple categorizations that could be put into practice. Another question concerned the nature of the work itself. It has been argued that in the late medieval period, work "shaped social identity to a much greater extent than in either earlier or later times."²⁰ Thus, from this point of view, the refusal to work when in good physical or mental condition was seen as suspicious. Toward the early modern period, poverty was increasingly seen, on a social level, as an individual's own fault and even as a form of social parasitism.²¹

15 Clark, "Institutional and Legal Responses to Begging."

16 Bronislaw Geremek, *Poverty in History*, trans. Agnieszka Kolakowska (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1987); Axelle Brodiez-Dolino, "Poverty as a Social Stigma: Construction and Deconstruction," trans. Oliver Waïne, *Metropolitics*, 13 December 2019, available at: <https://www.metropoliques.eu/Poverty-as-a-Social-Stigma.html> (accessed 20 May 2022). The emphasis of work was still seen in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizens (1793). Article 21 stated: "Public relief is a sacred obligation. Society owes subsistence to unfortunate citizens, either by producing work for them or by providing the means of existence for those unable to work." Cited in Brodiez-Dolino, "Poverty as a Social Stigma."

17 Brodiez-Dolino, "Poverty as Social Stigma." See also Beatriz E. Salamanca, "Domingo de Soto and the Vagueness of Vagrancy: The Wickedness of Itinerant Lives," *Tropos* 4:1 (2017).

18 Shaffern, *Law and Justice*.

19 Epstein, *Wage Labor and Guilds in Medieval Europe*.

20 See e.g., Michael Uebel and Kellie Robertson, "Introduction: Conceptualizing Labor in the Middle Ages," in *The Middle Ages at Work*, ed. Kellie Robertson and Michael Uebel (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), DOI: 10.1007/978-1-137-07552-9_1.

21 Sharon Farmer, *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris: Gender, Ideology, and the Daily Lives of the Poor* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 64. At the same time, religious

However, the social stigma of being poor was already strong in the medieval period. This was especially the case with ‘sturdy beggars’ or vagabonds.²² There are medieval examples of ordinances advising preachers and monks as well as private almsgivers not to encourage charity toward vagabonds who were not willing to work. Augustine (354–430) argued that the Church ought not to provide aid to those who are able to work by referring to the distinction between the worthy and the unworthy poor.

Another point of interest for our subject is that wealth and a noble background were not a guarantee that a person would not be in distress and not worthy of aid, as the quote from the Benedictine theologian and reformer Peter Damian’s (ca. 1007–1072) *De elemosyna* shows: “Look for the man who is ashamed of being found and remain silent when you give. All the needy have a right to mercy but compassion is the stronger towards those who were rich and noble and who misfortunate has thrown into extreme misery.”²³ The already marginalized poor had become accustomed to their part and, if lucky, had a right to beg, but as Damian points out, an impoverished rich and noble person “who did not know how to survive, who suffered embarrassment as well as hunger, preferred to die than beg publicly and who thereby merited most to receive secret alms.”²⁴

Damian’s reference also to the emotions and especially to the recipient’s shame (*verecundia*) is interesting. Throughout the Middle Ages, one of the criteria for receiving aid was feeling ashamed of one’s misery. This was particularly the case for the already marginalized poor.²⁵ Ambrose drew attention to recognizing the shame of those in need, a sign that should guide the giver’s liberality.²⁶ For this reason, secret alms were also needed. Damian, furthermore, referred to the giver’s emotions, namely compassion. Generally speaking (and in accordance with Augustine’s definition), compassion was understood as the human ability to feel another’s grief and misery and an inclination to react in order to relieve

mendicancy also came to be seen as suspicious. See e.g., Penn R. Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

²² Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, 64–68.

²³ Peter Damian, *De elemosyna*, in *Patrologia Latina* CXLV, 214. Cited in Coleman, “Property and Poverty,” 628.

²⁴ Coleman, “Property and Poverty,” 628. See also Wim Decock, “Poor and Insolvent: Debtor Relief in Alvarez de Velasco’s *De privilegiis pauperum* (1630),” in Mäkinen et al., *Rights at the Margins*, 63–84.

²⁵ Coleman, “Property and Poverty,” 627–628.

²⁶ Ambrose, *De officiis ministrorum*, I, *Patrologia latina* XVI, 71–74, 130–131. Cited in Coleman, “Property and Poverty,” 628.

them. This needed to be a rational deliberation, since without compassion justice (*iustitia*) could not be preserved.²⁷

As already stated in the introduction to this chapter, poor relief in the Middle Ages was based on charity. From early Christian times, bishops and theologians focused on the duty of charity toward the needy and linked it closely to the doctrine of salvation. This doctrine was based on the idea that a person can influence one's own salvation by doing good deeds. Giving alms to the needy was such a good deed. Almsgiving was also understood as a reciprocal act and as mutual assistance: the recipient was fed, the giver received merits. It was also thought that the recipient should pray for the soul of the giver.²⁸ Theologians argued that donors benefited from almsgiving only if their intention was right, that is, the act of almsgiving arose from charity and compassion toward the needy. If the purpose to give was, for example, "to rid oneself of revolting beggars, no merit was obtained; rather, a sin had been committed."²⁹

Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) clarified the doctrine of almsgiving by stating that it required "heart, mouth, and act," since from the heart arises compassion for the poor, from the mouth a request and encouragement, and from the act, generosity. His list of four regulations to be considered in poor relief – reasons, consequences, means, and order – also referred to the doctrine of salvation. According to the pope, sudden need had to be met with love of one's neighbor; the consequences of helping the poor would be blessings for every party; the means of helping being alms; and the order of helping meant that almsgiving should be regular. For the pope, the most important aspect was the helper's intention, that is, benevolence. If the act of giving was done with the right intention, it was meritorious to the giver.³⁰

Despite the fact that daily almsgiving was understood as a way of achieving and dispensing mercy, medieval scholars also pointed to *ordo caritatis*, the right order of charity love. According to Thomas Aquinas, it involved first loving God as the Highest Good, then oneself (that is, to supply one's own sustenance and

27 Ritva Palmén, "Compassion and Pity," in *Moral Psychology in History*, ed. Virpi Mäkinen and Simo Knuuttila (manuscript in process). See also Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006); Simo Knuuttila, "Compassion in Medieval Philosophy and Theology," in *Apprehending Love: Theological and Philosophical Inquiries*, ed. Pekka Kärkkäinen and Olli-Pekka Vainio (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Society, 2019), 252–274; Lauren Berlant, "Introduction," in *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion*, ed. Lauren Berlant (London: Routledge, 2004), 1–14.

28 Clark, "Institutional and Legal Responses to Begging," 449–451.

29 Shaffern, *Law and Justice*, 136.

30 Pope Innocent III, *Elogio della carità: Libellus de eleemosyna – encomium charitatis*, ed. and trans. Stanislaw Fioramonti (Vatican City: Libreria editrice vaticana, 2001).

salvation), and after that prioritizing one's own family over one's neighbor, and one's neighbor over a stranger.³¹ One key question when considering almsgiving was to determine how close the object of charity was to the subject of love. Thus, foreign beggars and refugees were the last to be helped. Especially at the beginning of the fourteenth century, foreigners were even considered suspect when it came to poor relief. An Italian civil lawyer, Bartolus of Sassoferrato (1313–1357), for example, questioned whether poor foreigners should be supported from alms left for pious causes. Instead, he maintained that not everyone could be helped.³²

The *ordo caritatis*, as well as the doctrine of individual merit associated with almsgiving, show that “altruistic motives” were not a significant part of medieval moral theology, at least not where poor relief was concerned. The welfare of others was, on the one hand, overshadowed by the salvation of the individual.³³ On the other hand, the Aristotelian idea of human beings as social animals orienting to *bonum commune* was also an important factor to be considered in society.³⁴ It also could be argued that the notion of *ordo caritatis* contained both forms, the pursuit of one's own good as well as of common good. One's own good and the common good belong together without distinction: when a person pursues some particular (own) good, at the same time (s)he also pursues the common good. A person could nevertheless be mistaken concerning the goodness of the object she pursues and therefore she could be misdirected, as Thomas Aquinas, for example, argued. Even then her actions were not understood to be selfish in the modern sense of the word because her will pursues the good and therefore at the same time she pursues the common good.³⁵

The principle of *ordo caritatis*, however, raises the problem of considering the needs of the nearest ones (neighbors). Love cannot be directed to anything bad, evil, or imperfect but still good deeds have to be performed for the sake of something else. The practical solution was charity and benevolence, that is, giving alms, which was a matter of mutual benefit (or merit). On the one hand, the question was also that of the order of salvation. The giver received con-

31 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, in *Opera omnia*, vols. 4–12, edited by S. Sabina (Rome, 1888–1906), II-II, 26, 3.

32 Robinson, “Rights and Needs,” 58–59.

33 Cf. Chapter 12 in this volume where Isabelle Mandrella discusses the individualistic nature of ethics in Thomas Aquinas and asks whether the Golden Rule has any value and significance in his ethics.

34 More on this theme, see Chapter 13 in this volume where Emanuele Lacca considers the ideas of justice, dignity, and the care of the others in Pedro de Ledesma.

35 Juhana Toivanen, “Common Good and Individual Good, in *Moral Psychology in History: From Ancient to Early Modern*”, ed. Virpi Mäkinen and Simo Knuuttila (Dordrecht: Springer, 2023), forthcoming.

firmation of her orientation toward the highest (i.e., spiritual) good, while the recipient received aid for the fulfillment of their physical needs (to survive). According to traditional theological teaching among the Church Fathers and medieval theologians, the soul of the rich was in constant danger because of wealth and its consequences, such as greed (*avaritia*), but for the poor the sole danger was related to her starving body. On the other hand, the Church taught that in this life temporal poverty and misery would be glorified in the hereafter. Thus, even the souls of the poor were counseled and promised to be saved, but only through suffering and after this life. The main problem still existed: the poor had to be helped but poverty could and should not be eradicated, not on the side of the givers but not even on the side of the receivers.³⁶

3 Property and Poverty

In medieval poor relief, property and poverty were closely interconnected and necessary for each other.³⁷ The common understanding was that “if all were poor, none would have the support of another; if all were rich, none would labor and the world would immediately fail.” As an English Bishop, Thomas Brinton (d. 1389), put it: “to give alms was the rich man’s duty; to beg the poor man’s lot.”³⁸ The duty to distribute wealth and especially superfluities was a commonly stated argument among medieval canon lawyers and theologians. In fact, in accordance with natural right (*ius naturale*), superfluities were understood to belong to the poor. Referring to the Church Fathers, the *Decretum*, for example, stated that “[t]he bread which you withhold belongs to the hungry; the clothing you shut away, to the naked; and the money you bury in the earth is the redemption and freedom of the penniless.”³⁹ “It is the hungry man’s bread that you withhold, the naked man’s cloak that you store away, the money that you bury in the earth is the price of the poor man’s ransom and freedom.”⁴⁰

³⁶ Carter Lindberg, *Beyond Charity: Reformation Initiatives for the Poor* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

³⁷ See Coleman, “Property and Poverty.” See also Samuel K. Cohn Jr., “Rich and Poor in Western Europe c. 1375–1475: The Political Paradox of Material Wellbeing,” in *Approaches to Poverty in Medieval Europe: Complexities, Contradictions, Transformations, c. 1100–1500*, ed. Sharon Ann Farmer (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 145–173.

³⁸ Both citations are from Clark, “Institutional and Legal Responses to Begging,” 451.

³⁹ D. 47, cited in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, 66, 7.

⁴⁰ D. 47, cited in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, 66, 7.

The background for such an understanding was based on the definition of natural right by a Roman lawyer, Ulpian (d. 228 CE), who included the common possession of all in his definition.⁴¹ Accordingly, even though property was considered by human law to be private, it was understood to be common in the sense of being shared with those in need. It is also important to note that natural goods were originally created to be used for sustenance.⁴² Thus, the term ‘superfluities’ was understood as the property that remained after providing for one’s daily necessities, satisfying the needs of dependents, and fulfilling outstanding obligations. This ‘spare’ property was the portion which one was obliged to share in times of need.⁴³

Thus, it was morally illicit to save up money for one’s own purposes and to try to change one’s social status to make it higher than it was. Some theologians also argued that to give everything to the poor and make oneself needy, was morally illicit.⁴⁴

4 The Principle of Extreme Necessity

If the wealthy had a duty to give their surplus to the poor, did the poor have a corresponding legal claim to the surplus of the wealthy? This was a question posed by early thirteenth-century canon lawyers when commenting on Gratian’s *Decretum*.⁴⁵ The question arose above all from a passage where Gratian referred to the sermon of Basil of Caesarea (ca. 330–379), in which the Church Father seemed to approve of theft in extreme emergency. According to St. Basil, in such a state the real criminals were the wealthy, not hungry thieves, because it was less of a crime to take another’s surplus than to refuse to share it with someone in extreme need. He also referred to the natural law ideal of the common property of all.⁴⁶

⁴¹ For its biblical background, see Acts 4:32–37.

⁴² See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, 66, 1.

⁴³ Clark, “Institutional and Legal Responses to Begging,” 451.

⁴⁴ Traver, “William of Saint Amour’s Two Disputed Questions.”

⁴⁵ D. 86 c. 21; D. 42 c. 1; D. 5 c. 26. For the influence of the decretists, see Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights: Studies on Natural Rights, Natural Law, and Church Law 1150–1625* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 43–77.

⁴⁶ Basil of Caesarea, *Opera*, in *Patrologia Graeca* XXXI, ed. Migne (Paris, 1857). References from Marco Bartoli, “Theft in Case of Need: Reflections on the Ethical-Economic Lexicon of the Middle Ages,” *Journal for Markets and Ethics/Zeitschrift für Marktwirtschaft und Ethik* 6:1 (2018): 34–35, DOI: 10.2478/jome-2018–0024.

Some canon lawyers interpreted the passage from Basil to be merely a rhetorical remark, but some saw it from an innovative point of view. Among the latter were, for example, canonist Alanus (d. ca. 1238), who argued that in time of famine “the poor person does not steal but takes what is his right (*ius suum*).”⁴⁷ Hostiensis (d. 1271), for his part, wrote that “he who sees hunger seems to exercise more his own right (*ius suum*) than to plan theft.”⁴⁸ According to Brian Tierney, these thirteenth-century decretist texts referring to the poor in extreme need are the earliest conceptual and theoretical formulations of individual rights,⁴⁹ although in preference to the term ‘theoretical,’ I would rather speak about early conceptual formulations. Nevertheless, canon lawyers’ novel way of looking at the state of the poor as rights bearers in extreme need paved the way for the doctrine of necessity – *necessitas non habet legem* (necessity does not have law) – among medieval authors.⁵⁰

Importantly, by ‘extreme necessity’ medieval authors referred to a very short-term life-threatening distress, not a chronic deficiency, as the example from Thomas Aquinas clarifies:

If the need be so manifest and urgent, that it is evident that the present need must be remedied by whatever means be at hand (for instance when a person is in some imminent danger, and there is no other possible remedy), then it is lawful for a man to succor his own need by means of another’s property, by taking it either openly or secretly: nor is this properly speaking theft or robbery.⁵¹

It should be noted, however, that Aquinas only expected people to give from their own surplus, and only in the case of extreme need. As the above citation shows, the maxim of extreme necessity was known and widely referred to by medieval theologians, especially in the context of theft. Some thought (as Aquinas did) that to steal in extreme need was permissible for reasons of self-preservation.⁵² Some, however, considered it a natural right (*ius naturale*) to take and use someone else’s property even against their own will if this was the only means to save someone’s life. This is what the canon lawyers of the time also

⁴⁷ Alanus, *Gloss ad Comp.* I 5.26.5. References from Tierney, *The Idea*, 73.

⁴⁸ Hostiensis, *Lectura in V libros Decretalium*, X.5.18.3. References from Tierney, *The Idea*, 73.

⁴⁹ Tierney, *The Idea*, 69–77.

⁵⁰ Bartoli, “Theft in Case of Need,” 35; Gilles Couvreur, *Les pauvres ont-ils des droits? Recherches sur le vol en cas d’extrême nécessité depuis la concordia de Gratien (1140) jusqu’à Guillaume D’Auxerre († 1231)*. Analecta Gregoriana 111 (Rome: Presses de l’université grégorienne, 1961).

⁵¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, 66, 7.

⁵² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, 66, 7.

thought. In such a case, people should not be punished for their actions.⁵³ Thus, the situation of extreme necessity was understood to be an exemption from the positive laws that governed property rights. Instead, it was thought that in the case of necessity everything was common and could be shared in accordance with natural right. The right of necessity was not, however, a positive right. In the case of extreme necessity, others have ‘no-right’ to interfere, nor are they under any duty to help the individual in need escape necessity’s grasp.⁵⁴

According to the French theologian, Godefroid of Fontaines (d. 1309), in extreme necessity, each person has at least a right to use (*ius utendi*) the common good because all people have the moral duty to self-preservation from which they derive the inalienable right to preserve their own lives, that is, the right to sustenance, or in modern terms, the right to life.⁵⁵ The Franciscan theologian, William Ockham (1285–1347), paid even more attention to the subject. According to him, a person had an inalienable right to use the property of another in a life-threatening situation such as famine, unless the owner himself needed it at the same time and for a reason of similar necessity. He also added that the act of stealing on account of hunger is not unlawful as long as the theft is for an essential need, that is, is limited to alleviating extreme distress. Moreover, according to Ockham, hungry people were not obliged to return or pay compensation for the bread or cheese they ate after the situation had improved.⁵⁶ For him, the right to use (*ius utendi*) was also an inalienable right to survive.⁵⁷ He therefore formulated a detailed understanding of the individual right to subsistence. Thus, among late thirteenth-century and early fourteenth-century theologians, a consensus

53 For the history of the maxim of necessity in general, see Johannes W. Pichler, *Necessitas: Ein Element des mittelalterlichen und neuzeitlichen Rechts*, Schriften zur Rechtsgeschichte 27 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1983); F. Roumy, “L’origine et la diffusion de l’adage canonique *Necessitas non habet legem* (VIIIe–XIIIe s.),” in *Medieval Church Law and the Origins of the Western Legal Tradition: A Tribute to Kenneth Pennington*, ed. W. P. Müller and M. E. Sommar (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press), 301–319. See also Scott G. Swanson, “The Medieval Foundations of John Locke’s Theory of Natural Rights: Rights of Subsistence and the Principle of Extreme Necessity,” *History of Political Thought* 18 (1997): 399–456.

54 Robinson, “Rights and Needs”; Couvreur, *Les pauvres*, 81–84, 259–260.

55 Godefroid of Fontaines, *Quodlibet* VIII, q. 11, 105. See also Virpi Mäkinen, *Property Rights in the Late Medieval Discussion on Franciscan Poverty* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 124–139 in which I explore Godfrey of Fontaines’s ideas on the natural rights of the poor as part of his criticism of the ideal of Franciscan poverty.

56 William Ockham, *Opus nonaginta dierum*, in Guillelmi de Ockham, *Opera Politica*, vol. 2, ed. J. Sikes and H. S. Offler (Manchester: The University Press, 1963), c. 65, 577–578.

57 Annabel S. Brett, *Liberty, Right and Nature: Individual Rights in Later Scholastic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 50–68.

emerged that a starving person was not guilty of theft in times of extreme necessity.

5 The Maxim of Extreme Necessity in Northern Medieval Legislation

We do not know for certain whether the principle of extreme necessity was also developed to meet the real needs of the poor since as far as I am aware there is no mapping of its use in medieval legal procedures.⁵⁸ There are, however, different formulations of the principle/maxim in medieval legislation in several European provincial laws, at least up to the Reformation period.⁵⁹ In this section, I will offer some examples from medieval Nordic laws.⁶⁰ The Swedish provincial law from Södermanland in 1327 stated with regard to theft and its penalties: “If someone passes through the land of turnips, he is allowed to take five turnips without penalty (saklöst). If he takes more and gets caught in the act himself, he will have to pay a fine of one ‘öre.’”⁶¹ Another medieval Nordic law, the Code of Norwegian King Magnus the Lawmender in 1274, referred more explicitly to extreme cases: “If a man who does not get a job and is in danger of starving but saves his life because of the food he has stolen, he should not be sentenced. But if a man at work steals, he can be condemned.”⁶²

As the above laws show, in normal situations, the theft of foodstuffs was at least fined. It is also noteworthy (especially in Swedish law) that only some specific items (i. e., turnips) could be freely taken in extreme need, albeit only a limited number, like other similar kinds of vegetables (e. g., beans, cabbage, and onions). If larger numbers of these vegetables were taken, a fine of from one to three öre was imposed.⁶³ The reason for this was perhaps that turnips were a

58 See Richard Helmholz, “Natural Human Rights: The Perspective of the *Ius commune*,” *Catholic University Law Review* 52 (2002–2003): 305–306.

59 Swanson, “The Medieval Foundations.”

60 I would like to thank Professor Mia Korpiola for introducing me to these laws. Currently, she and Professor Jørn Øyrehagen Sunde are composing a co-written article on the doctrine of necessity in medieval Nordic laws.

61 *Södermannalagen* X, §2, 115 in *Svenska landskapslagar* (1327) vol. 3, ed. and trans. Åke Holmbäck and Elias Wessén (Uppsala, 1940): “Går någon genom ett rovland, tage han saklöst fem rovor. Tager han flera och blir tagen på bar gärning, böte han en öre.” Translation mine.

62 *Landrecht des Königs Magnus Hakonarson* (1263–1280), ed. Rudolf Meissner (Weimar, 1941): ix, 2, 380–381. Translation mine.

63 *Södermannalagen* X, §1.

very common and much used crop in the medieval Nordic countries until the nineteenth century, when the potato supplanted it. In addition to their nutrient content, turnips also withstood cold winters well. Under Norwegian law, a notion was held that unemployment together with extreme distress were reasons for not being sentenced. This also corresponds to the importance of work discussed earlier.

6 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with poor relief in medieval society and has argued that it was mainly based on charity-based theology that was deeply connected to the doctrine of salvation, the order of charity, and the duty to provide from one's surplus. The ideal emphasized the spiritual function of the poor, who would pray for their donors, suffer in their misery, and hope for treasures in heaven. The poor were expected to be humble, ashamed, and content with their condition. Such 'theology of the poor' hardly paid any attention to the reasons for poverty, but only perpetuated misery by sanctioning the notion of being rewarded in the hereafter. The focus, moreover, was more on the almsgivers than the destitute recipients.

As this chapter has shown, thirteenth- and fourteenth-century canon lawyers and theologians tried to focus more on the poor themselves by pointing out their natural right to receive aid as opposed to the duties of others. Especially among medieval theologians, the maxim of extreme necessity and its interpretation in the context of moral theology paved the way for subsistence rights. Even though individuals were now understood to be active, rights-bearing persons, discussion on rights-based poor relief was still theoretical. Examples from Nordic provincial laws, however, show that the law sought to protect the most vulnerable members of society.

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Chapter 12

Encountering Others in Medieval Ethics: The Case of Thomas Aquinas

Introduction

Medieval ethics is individualistic in approach and supposes an autonomous moral agent, endowed with practical reason and its capacity to recognize good and bad independently from divine revelation. Medieval thinkers emphasize the rational and volitional autonomy of a moral agent: nobody else is able to decide and act instead of or for me. Within the medieval theory of action, the concepts of intentionality, personal responsibility, and imputability come to the fore, and with them those of freedom of the will and of conscience.

Practical reason includes not only the knowledge of universal moral principles but also the ability to rightly apply them in particular situations. What is morally to be done is the result of the particular judgement of practical reason in a concrete situation. This is the difference between a practical and a theoretical science: the object of a practical science is something contingent – in this case contingent acts – whereas the object of a theoretical science is something necessary. Due to this focus on the particular and contingent, medieval ethics represents a *scientia practica* distinct from theoretical science, i.e., based on its own self-evident (practical) principles and pursued with its own methods.

Hence, the genuine place of morality for medieval moral philosophers is someone's particular and individual action or decision. But how does medieval ethics encounter others and what role does otherness play in ethical considerations and reasoning? I want to concretize these questions using the example of Thomas Aquinas – not because I want to give him an extraordinary position in medieval ethics but because of his systematic approach and the clarity and accuracy of his arguments. He demonstrates well how medieval ethics deals with the individual and the other, with the particular and the universal. First, I will present his position on particularity and his focus on individual reason. Second, I will show how Aquinas is of course aware of the social dimension of ethics, e.g., in his idea of a *bonum commune* or in his conception of the human being as an *animal sociale*. Finally, I will come to a conclusion.

1 The Particularistic Approach of Aquinas's Ethics

In principle, the ethics of Thomas Aquinas is Aristotelian: he adopts the Aristotelian distinction between theory and practice, i.e., between theoretical and practical science and reason. This remark, perhaps trivial at first sight, is eminently important for the right understanding of ethics as practical science and of the specific role of practical reason.¹

Saying that ethics is a practical science means understanding it as having its own dignity, distinguished and independent from theoretical science. Hence, practical reason is not simply derivative of theoretical reason. Put differently, ethics is not simply derivative of metaphysics.² Rather, practical reason has its own sphere, its own object, and its own method, focused on contingent, singular, unforeseeable, and irreproducible action. But how is it possible that a science – characterized as universal and objective – has the contingent as its object?³ To solve this problem, we have to consider that of course there are universal moral principles in ethics; however, the point is that they never determine the action immediately. Instead, we need the intermediary role of practical reason, whose role is to apply the universal rational principles to the particular situation of a contingent action.

Aquinas demonstrates this process in his treatise on law in *Summa theologiae* I-II. At the beginning of question 94, article 2, he parallelizes theoretical and practical reason because both share a similar structure. Theory and practice – and their different objects ‘being’ (*ens*) and ‘good’ (*bonum*) – represent two co-equal orders corresponding to the human soul as knowing and desiring.⁴ For to know (*vis cognitiva*) and to desire (*vis appetitiva*) are two different aspects of the

1 Matthias Lutz-Bachmann, “Praktisches Wissen und ‘Praktische Wissenschaft’: Zur Epistemologie der Moralphilosophie bei Thomas von Aquin,” in *Handlung und Wissenschaft. Die Epistemologie der praktischen Wissenschaften im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert/Action and Science. The Epistemology of the Practical Sciences in the 13th and 14th Centuries*, ed. Matthias Lutz-Bachmann and Alexander Fidora (Berlin: Akademie, 2008), 89–96.

2 Isabelle Mandrella, “Thomas von Aquin und die Selbstständigkeit der praktischen Vernunft. Kritische Bemerkungen zu Jürgen Habermas,” *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 65 (2020): 159–174.

3 Klaus Jacobi, “‘Actus circa singularia sunt’ – ‘scientia non est de singularibus.’ Thomas von Aquins Konzeption einer praktischen Wissenschaft,” in Lutz-Bachmann and Fidora, *Handlung und Wissenschaft/Action and Science*, 75–87.

4 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 94, 2.

one human grasp of reality.⁵ (In this context Aquinas recalls the famous dictum *anima est quodammodo omnia*: “The soul is in a certain way everything.” That means: The soul is the starting point from which the human being is able to extend to everything – that is, to the whole reality.⁶)

Hence Aquinas understands both theoretical and practical reason as a participation in divine reason, which is manifested in the fact that each human being is equipped with the natural knowledge of first self-evident concepts and principles. Corresponding to the aspects of the soul as knowing and desiring, they differ in theoretical and practical reason: while theoretical reason considers being and the self-evident principle of non-contradiction, practical reason regards the good and operates under the formal principle “The good is to be done, the bad to be avoided” (*bonum est faciendum, malum vitandum*).⁷

But what is the morally good in a particular contingent action? In question 94, article 4, Aquinas explains that it is not possible to know this on the same general and necessary level as is the case in the realm of theoretical knowledge, where the non-contingent is considered. In *praxis*, the process of derivation from the first general principles to the singular action, in order to specify the particular good, is another one. In theoretical knowledge the process is faultless, because of the derivative necessity of the relation between principles and their conclusions. That is why both principles and conclusions are of the same certainty for everyone. In practical knowledge this is different: the universal principles are of the same certainty for everyone, but not so the conclusions. The consequence is clear: “The more we descend into particulars, the more mistakes we make.”⁸

The great difficulty is that in contingent action we cannot define the particular good with perfect precision. On the level of general principles, however, it may be clear what the good is. This led Martha Nussbaum (indeed with regard to Aristotle) to speak in her first monograph of the “fragility of goodness.”⁹ The good is fragile because it lacks the deducible, logical necessity that we find in theory. However, this fragility is not due to a deficiency of human reason, but pertains to the nature of *praxis*, which requires that the good – in order to obtain moral certainty – has to be applied anew according to each singular sit-

5 Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate* I, 1.

6 Rolf Darge, “Wahre Welt. Die Welt als offenes Beziehungsfeld des menschlichen Geistes im mittelalterlichen Denken,” *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 59 (2014): 25–41.

7 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 94, 2.

8 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 94, 4: “hoc tanto magis invenitur deficere, quanto magis ad particularia descenditur.” Translation mine.

9 Martha Craven Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

uation.¹⁰ The autonomy of practical reason responsible for determining the good to be done is truly great.

Consequently, Aquinas's attempts to normatively define the good are strikingly tentative. There are several passages in which he treats this topic. In *Summa theologiae* I-II question 94, article 2, we find at the end the famous list of natural inclinations: self-preservation, preservation of the species, living in community (a factor that will reappear later!), and searching for truth.¹¹ They are open guidelines, only generally delimiting the field of human flourishing. In article 4 he presents general moral principles, very close to the first principle of practical reason *bonum faciendum*, *malum vitandum*, but on a less universal level; for example: "Goods entrusted to another should be restored to their owner" (*deposita sint reddenda*).¹² They are not so immutable and ineradicable as the first principle; as article 5 notes, they concern a part of natural law that reason can change by adding or subtracting something,¹³ or – as we find in question 95, article 2 – that reason can shape not only by concluding (*per modum conclusionum*), but also by determining (*per modum determinationis*).¹⁴ A third text can be highlighted: in his theory of action, in *Summa theologiae* I-II question 18, Aquinas describes what is necessary to call an action morally good. He demonstrates how reason has to consider all circumstances of a particular situation, not only the object of the action (what is done), but in particular the intention (why it is done) – and of course all remaining circumstances (who, where, when, etc.).¹⁵

In all these attempts to outline what is good, the practical reason plays a pivotal role in order to ensure situational certainty. With respect to the natural inclinations, reason has to order (*ordinare*) and conduct (*dirigere*) them¹⁶ because they alone do not determine an action without rational mediation. Otherwise, it would be unimaginable to understand how the conflict between two or more natural inclinations should be resolved. Drawing specific conclusions and determinations from general principles about how to act in a singular situation is a function of the practical reason that finds and invents (*invenire/adinvenire*) these specific conclusions and determinations "through hard work" (*per industriam*),

¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 91, 3 ad 3.

¹¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 94, 2.

¹² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 94, 4.

¹³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 94, 5.

¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 95, 2.

¹⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, 18, especially articles 5 and 10.

¹⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 94, 4 ad 3; see also 94, 2 ad 3: "ratio ... est ordinativa omnium quae ad homines spectant."

as Aquinas says in question 91, article 3.¹⁷ Regarding the consideration of all circumstances of an action, the reason has the function, despite the priority of object and intention, to verify if a circumstance is convenient (*conveniens*) to reason and thus good, or not.¹⁸

It would be a huge misunderstanding to think that the non-definability and fragility of moral goodness should result in understanding it as something arbitrary. Aquinas wants to show that the conditions for human flourishing are in no way arbitrary but that it would be a false conclusion to hope that certainty could be found by somehow predetermining those conditions. This would degrade practical reason to a kind of purely receptive organ, depriving it of its autonomy. But in Aquinas's ethics, autonomy and individuality are indispensable factors without which an act could not be called a 'human act' (*actus humanus*) but at most an 'act of the human being' (*actus hominis*).¹⁹

The intrinsic relationship between rationality and individuality can be supported by three short examples from Aquinas's philosophy. The first example is his theory of conscience and its freedom, apparent especially in that he holds that even an erroneous conscience is binding. Here, several aspects are manifested: the autonomy of the practical reason, situated between objective standards and subjective approval; the irreplaceability of the autonomous judgement of the practical reason; the expression of personal identity through it. No external factor can influence these elements, not even if an objective error results and an individual moral agent errs.²⁰

The second example can be found in Aquinas's theory of action in *Summa theologiae* I-II question 18, article 9, where he says that there are no morally indifferent individual acts.²¹ It is of course possible to class acts as indifferent according to their genus. Generally speaking, for example, taking a walk is morally indifferent. But as soon as we speak of a singular and individual act, it loses its generically descriptive and indifferent character. Insofar as it is intended (by reason and will), this act pertains to the whole life of a particular person and gains in importance for the way she wants to live or for the idea of which person she wants to be. Thus, each act is the non-delegable expression of the moral identity of an individual agent and as such no longer morally indifferent.

17 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 91, 3.

18 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 18, 5.

19 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 1, 1.

20 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 19, 5 and 6. See Tobias Hoffmann, "Conscience and synderesis," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 255–264.

21 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 18, 9.

The third case concerns Aquinas's definition of *persona* as – so the classical Boethian definition – “individual substance of rational nature” (*rationabilis naturae individua substantia*). He explains it in highlighting that a person is called someone “who dominates her actions – that means who is not passively determined, but who acts by herself” (*habent dominium sui actus, et non solum aguntur, sicut alia, sed per se agunt*). But actions concern particular situations. That is why individual rational natures have a proper designation, namely ‘person.’²² Thus the individual personality of a human being of rational nature becomes manifest in his or her concrete and singular actions. It is in practical contexts that a person reveals who she wants to be and how she wants to live.

2 Otherness in Aquinas's Ethics

Looking at this individualistic approach we may wonder where there should be a constitutive role of otherness in Aquinas's ethics. But of course, as I already said above, Aquinas is aware of the social dimension of ethics.

First, there are simple anthropological reasons: it is characteristic of human beings that they live together – here Aquinas unambiguously follows the Aristotelian definition of the human being as a social and political animal (*animal sociale et politicum*). He does not explain it further but seems to accept it as a biological or natural fact. In *Summa theologiae* I-II question 72, article 4, in describing how sin has to be understood as an inordinate act, he holds that the human being is connected to a threefold order. The first regards the convenience to the rule of reason (*regula rationis*) as I previously described. The second concerns the convenience with the rule of divine law (*regula divinae legis*). This is an explicitly theological claim, which, as Aquinas says, encloses the first order but at the same time transcends it insofar as it addresses a believer. “And if,” Aquinas says, the “human being was naturally an isolated animal (*animal solitarium*), these two orders would be enough. But the human being is naturally a political and social animal. That is why a third order is necessary by which the human being is ordered to other human beings with which he has to live together.”²³ This third order is also ruled by reason so that a threefold differentiation of sins follows: against God, against ourselves, and against others.²⁴ But while sins against God have a special status because they exceed human reason insofar as

²² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I 29, 1. Translation mine.

²³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 72, 4.

²⁴ In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this triad of duties will become a leading classification in ethics.

they address the believer, sins against ourselves and against others, both ruled by reason alone, are not significantly differentiated. To act irrationally against oneself or against others is each a violation of the *regula rationis*.

A similar argument can be found in the prologue of Aquinas's *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*. Here Aquinas again deals with order, referring to the famous Aristotelian dictum that it is the duty of the wise to order (*sapientis est ordinare*). Aquinas says that we find a twofold order in things. The first is a relation of the parts of a whole, which are ordered with respect to one another, and the second is a relation of things ordered to one end. The second is more basic than the first. (In Aquinas's example, the parts of an army are ordered with respect to one another because the whole army is ordered to the one commander as the final end.) In application to moral philosophy which treats "the order reason establishes by considering the acts of the will" (*ordo, quem ratio considerando facit in operationibus voluntatis*), Aquinas concludes that moral philosophy has to consider the human activities (*operationes humanae*) insofar as they are ordered with respect to one another and to an end.²⁵ Does this mean that Aquinas wants to speak of the activities of human beings as a social group and could we find here a form of 'social theory,' as John Finnis supposes in his monograph about moral, political, and legal theory in Aquinas?²⁶ I think that it is significant that Aquinas immediately returns to a perspective centred on the individual, emphasizing that a human action can only be regarded under the condition that it is volitional and rational, which is to say, intentional. Consequently, the object of moral philosophy is a particular human action insofar as it is ordered to an end, or, put otherwise, it is the individual human being who acts intentionally. Both descriptions are formulated in the singular.

Only in a second step does Aquinas enlarge this perspective, again with a pragmatic argument: we have to consider that the human being is naturally a social animal that needs many things for living that he or she is not able to achieve alone. Hence it is a natural fact that the human being is part of a whole through which he or she is enabled to live. This entails, first of all, biological dependence on the things that are necessary for life: birth, food, education – in short, a familial context. Second, the human being, as a social animal, needs others not only in order to live, but also to live well (*ut homo non solum vivat, sed et bene vivat*). This condition is fulfilled in political community.

²⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Ethicorum* I, 1. Translation mine.

²⁶ John Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 23–28.

We have arrived now at a border between ethics and politics – however, I do not want to argue for otherness in politics. But we must concede that our natural need of others, as a basis for politics, does also have moral consequences. It is interesting that Aquinas specifies these consequences not positively, but negatively, in the sense of threatening the individual with punishment in those cases individual malefactors have to be domesticated by public authority. Here again the nature of the human being as a social animal forces us to enlarge the individual's perspective and to include others. But, again, this human condition is simply added to the individual comprehension of morality and does not seem to change it essentially (at most to disturb it!).

Looking at Aquinas's social theory and politics leads us to another important moment of otherness that has a constant place in his natural law theory: the common good (*bonum commune*). This has to do with Aquinas's definition of law as “nothing other than an ordering of reason for the common good from one who has care of the community, and promulgated.”²⁷ In *Summa theologiae* I-II question 90, article 2, Aquinas treats the orientation to the common good as a property of the law. The objections deal with the difference between the common good on the one hand and particular or private good on the other. The second objection is especially interesting. “The law,” Aquinas says, “conducts the human being in acting. But human acts concern something particular. So the law should be ordered to the particular good.”²⁸ The problem is clear: how can a law, oriented to the common good, have ethical importance if ethics is always instantiated in individual cases?

The answer Aquinas gives is a teleological one and it is of great importance, for our topic as well. The common good is not a simple aggregation of all particular goods, but nevertheless unifies all particular goods. This unifying function that the concept ‘common’ good supposes is not a predicative one that expresses a community of genus or species. It is solely possible to speak about a common good because of the teleological structure of human acting: every human act of practical reason is not only ordered to a particular end, but to a final end (*finis ultimus*), namely felicity or beatitude. In this way, every act and every law is always oriented to the common good “insofar [as] it is called common end (*finis communis*),”²⁹ or, as Aquinas answers the third objection, insofar as “the final end is the common good.”³⁰

²⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 90, 4.

²⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 90, 2 obj. 2.

²⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 90, 2 ad 2.

It is important to see the formal argumentation that Aquinas adopts from Aristotle's analysis of *eudaimonia* in the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Again, Aquinas is careful in speaking of the good with regard to concrete material content. Aristotle tried to describe a specific human common good by his famous 'ergon-Argument' in chapter 6 of the first book.³¹ The unique feature and at the same time the common good of the human being that differentiates him or her from other beings is his or her rationality. Aquinas's attempt to outline the common good of the human being in a more concrete manner can be found in *Summa theologiae* I-II question 91, article 2, where he presents the capacity of practical reason to distinguish between good and evil as a special participation of the divine intellect. He proves this by the fact that human beings, like all created beings, have – "impressed on them by the eternal law of the creator – a specific inclination to their own activities and ends."³² In short: the common good of human beings consists in living a life in accord with rationality.

Of course, this general view, knowingly renouncing concrete definitions, does not dispense with the challenge to spell out in concrete human laws how the common good could be realized in a community. In this case, Aquinas knows very well that there can be a collision between the common good and particular goods, as in the case where a judge condemns a thief to be put to death, to cite an example of his.³³ But we have to consider that these concrete laws always result from the determinations and conclusions drawn by practical reason in applying general principles to concrete situations – along the lines that I have already described. The common good in ethics, we can resume, is therefore not its own 'social' entity that gives any immediate instruction on how to act. Like all goods, it requires a rational mediation which can only be done individually.

For the purpose of my argumentation, we can nevertheless retain an important point: for Aquinas, there exists a felicity of the human genus. This is much more than the negative delimitation we found above (in the *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*) when Aquinas considered the punishment that a government imposes on the individual as a result of our natural need to live together with others. Here it means that the appreciation of my own inclinations and capacities also implies the appreciation of the other as a human being too. My rea-

30 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 90, 2 ad 3: "nisi per ordinationem ad ultimum finem, qui est bonum commune." Translation mine.

31 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 6 (1097b 27–1098a 7).

32 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 91, 2: "ex impressione ejus [scil. legis aeternae] habent inclinationes in proprios actus et fines." Translation mine.

33 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 19, 10. See Michael Baur, "Law and Natural Law," in Davies and Stump, *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, 238–254, here: 238.

son and my freedom are not only my own; I must always recognize that they also have to be ascribed to other human beings.

We can find an echo of this insight in a moral principle that Aquinas only mentions on a few occasions (perhaps because of the problematic moral suitability of this principle that could also be used in cases of moral badness): the Golden Rule. The principle “Treat others as you want to be treated” is, to a certain degree, an expression of the reciprocal appreciation of human beings. “*Homo ita se habet ad alterum sicut ad se*,” Aquinas asserts and quotes Aristotle: “Friendship towards another arises from friendship towards oneself.”³⁴ So the simple question is: does the Golden Rule have any value and significance in Aquinas’s ethics?

First of all, I do not see any particular indications in Aquinas’s ethics that would allow us to claim his specific interest in the perspective of the other – not even in the case of the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule only plays a role because it is a rational principle, mirroring a moral intuition and being therefore part of the natural known conceptions of good that the natural law theory tries to explain. We find the same in a similar and similarly important principle: “One should love one’s neighbour as oneself.” It is part of the double commandment in which the Ten Commandments are summarized.³⁵ Due to the fact that the natural law tradition identifies the Decalogue with natural law (God commanded nothing new!),³⁶ the principle “One should love one’s neighbour as oneself” is part of the natural law. Aquinas agrees that it is also part of the “first and general precepts of the natural law that are self-evident to human reason.”³⁷ But we have to note the plural here: meant are secondary principles that Aquinas interprets as close correlates of the first principle *bonum faciendum, malum vitandum*. But they are not identical with it, because – as we saw above – they are in principle modifiable and determinable by reason. In *Summa theologiae* I-II question 94, article 2, Aquinas distinguishes clearly between these two levels of natural law and concludes that, in a strong sense, natural law has only this one precept, on which its closer rational specifications like, e. g., the Golden Rule, “are founded.”³⁸

34 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 99, 1 ad 3; see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* IX, 8.

35 Mt. 22:34–40.

36 One of the sources is the *Decretum Gratiani* and its definition of natural law: “*Ius naturale est quod in lege et evangelio continetur.*”

37 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 100, 3 ad 1: “*prima et communia praecepta legis naturae quae sunt per se nota rationi humani.*” Translation mine.

38 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 94, 2: “*super hoc fundantur omnia alia praecepta legis naturae.*”

I tried to show that it is difficult to find direct evidence for an ethics of otherness in Aquinas. But, again (as was the case above when I spoke about the respect for other human beings that follows from my self-conception as a rational and free human being), we have perhaps to search indirectly. One important aspect can be found in Aquinas's virtue ethics or in his comprehension of virtue. The starting point, in *Summa theologiae* I-II question 55, article 1, is anew the fact that the human rational being "is not determined by only one possibility, but instead is open, in a non-determined manner, to many possibilities."³⁹ But how can the human being reach the good under those conditions?

Following the Aristotelian theory, Aquinas understands virtues as good habits (*habitus*) that help to perfect the common good of the human being that he – as we saw above – identifies with the final end to which every human being is ordered. Hence, virtues serve for the perfection of human flourishing; they are on the one hand non-determined, but on the other hand not arbitrary elements of the fulfilment of the human good.⁴⁰ Interesting for us is the fact that virtues have to do with habituation and custom (in Latin *mos*, the etymological origin of *moralis*). Aquinas explains the concept *mos* by referring to the Greek language that distinguishes two meanings: *ēthos* (with *eta*: character, habituation) and *ethos* (with *epsilon*: custom).⁴¹ On the one hand, *mores* are specific natural inclinations to fulfil one's own end. But on the other hand, the realization of these inclinations generates *mores* that are consolidated in society because we become accustomed to them.

Again, we are at an important point because this context compels Aquinas to leave the individual and to look to the human genus. But, again, it is striking that he does not follow this perspective but immediately returns to the individual. As if he wants to prevent misunderstandings, he answers the question of *Summa theologiae* I-II question 63, article 1, about whether the virtues in us are caused by nature, by distinguishing the nature of the human species from the individual human nature. He admits that the virtues, based on natural inclinations, are natural to human beings in common, but only in the form of aptitudes. Concerning their concrete development, realization, and perfection, they need the individual practical reason of an autonomous moral agent who is not simply constrained by nature to one specific action (*natura determinatur ad unum*), but able to choose and to realize the good in a particular action, cor-

³⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 55, 1: "potentiae rationales, quae sunt propriae hominis, non sunt determinatae ad unum, sed se habent indeterminate ad multa." Translation mine.

⁴⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 55, 3.

⁴¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 58, 1.

responding to the concrete situation.⁴² Hence, article 2 clearly manifests how the individual comes to the fore: Aquinas discusses how the virtues are caused by one's own acts, "insofar they come from reason."⁴³

But a critical question remains: if we take virtue ethics seriously, we should ask whether the common *ethos* does not represent a constitutive presupposition for moral acting that cannot be neglected. It considers the eminently important question of the 'sources of morality' as 'sources of the self,' as Charles Taylor said.⁴⁴ How could an individual, without relations to others, have any possibility of learning the virtues and of developing her own moral view without accustoming herself to an *ethos* that always is given by others? In this perspective, the above-mentioned dependence on education and a familial context Aquinas mentions as a biological frame undoubtedly receives a greater significance. We may find here evidence for otherness in Aquinas's ethics, especially in his virtue ethics. But the point is that Aquinas did not spend much effort to deepen this context. So there are many good reasons to assume that in Aquinas's view it does not concern the core of morality as it is inseparably connected to the particular act.

3 Conclusion

Aquinas's approach is particularistic and individualistic – not in a relativistic sense, but due to practical rationality. Furthermore, this does not mean negating any dimension of otherness in Aquinas's ethics (nor in his metaphysics⁴⁵). Aquinas shows that *de facto* we cannot be moral without considering other human beings; otherwise, we would not be human. But the core of morality is the individual moral agent who is responsible and who remains the fixed-point of all willing and acting. At the same time, it is beyond question that human morality has to be and is rational; principles concerning others like "nobody is to be

⁴² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 63, 1: "consummatio autem huiusmodi virtutum non est secundum unum modum actionis, sed diversimode, secundum materias diversas in quibus virtutes operantur, et secundum diversas circumstantias."

⁴³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II 63, 2.

⁴⁴ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁴⁵ See Reto Luzius Fetz, "Interiorität und Exteriorität bei Emmanuel Levinas und Thomas von Aquin," in *Die Einheit der Person. Beiträge zur Anthropologie des Mittelalters. Richard Heinzmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Martin Thurner (Stuttgart, Berlin, and Cologne: Kohlhammer, 1998), 217–243.

harmed” or the Golden Rule are valuable because of their rationality. For Aquinas, rationality and the respect due to other human beings are so closely connected that the explicit question about whether he considers others in his ethics seems nearly to be an anachronistic one.

Of course, we could reproach Aquinas for having a too-optimistic conception of human rationality. In this view, the harsh critique of the self-centred attitude of European ethics such as we find, for example in Emmanuel Levinas and his impressive attempt to constitute an ‘ethics of otherness,’ is to a certain point legitimate. Nevertheless, there are two reasons why I think that it is worth reminiscing about Aquinas’s particularistic approach today. First, because it helps us keep in mind that – although we have general natural conceptions of the good – the good is not so easily defined and so logically deducible that it could be preserved from all fragility, e.g., by dictating what is commonly good and therefore good for others. Second, we should appreciate that morality, with autonomous reason and free will as its basic conditions, is fundamentally and indispensably bound to the first-person perspective. This means that the human being, as a naturally social being, is always oriented to others, but can never be replaced by any other person.

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Emanuele Lacca

Chapter 13

Justice, Dignity, and the Care of the Others: Pedro de Ledesma, True Interpreter of Thomas Aquinas

Introduction

Discussion on justice usually refers to a complex system of rules that regulate welfare within a society, in order to achieve common good and fundamental value for social well-being. This system refers to a historically and socially accepted legal and/or moral tradition, on the basis of which any future development is integrated. Therefore, to speak of justice does not only mean referring to a historical *hic et nunc*, but expresses the need for a continuous confrontation with the roots of human beings and the institutions that form and represent them.

In our field of research, the School of Salamanca and its history, among scholars and theorists of justice, the Dominican Pedro de Ledesma (1544–1616)¹ seems to understand the whole tradition lucidly and shows it in a clear and comprehensible way to his contemporaries. An “iron” disciple of the Dominican theologian Domingo Báñez (1528–1604) and almost a contemporary of the Spanish Jesuit theologian Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), Ledesma had the merit of reflecting on justice in a concrete way, trying to show how justice, its limits and contradictions are the bearers in man of theories and examples that guide his moral action. At the same time, he contributed to enlighten the importance of the tradition, in particular the one represented by Thomas Aquinas (1224–1274).

There are not many bibliographical studies on Ledesma, but they all agree in suggesting the study of this disciple of Báñez above all for his originality, his independence from the master, and his argumentative strength in dealing with delicate subjects, both metaphysical and moral. Ledesma’s two main works are the

¹ On Ledesma’s life and works, see bibliography.

Tractatus de divina perfectione, infinitate et magnitudine (Salamanca, 1596) and the *Suma moral* (Salamanca, 1598).²

Ledesma studied justice and presented its applications in his moral work, the *Suma moral*, published in Salamanca in 1598 for the presses of Ioannes and Andreas Renaut. This text, monumental in its quantity, is no less interesting for its quality, as Ledesma deals with all possible moral questions, trying to give their interpretation in the light of the tradition known to him. The text is divided into two volumes: in the first he speaks of “everything that touches and pertains to the sacraments” and in the second of “everything moral, and cases of conscience that do not pertain to the sacraments.”

In this way, Ledesma can give an account of the whole moral “environment” of reference, trying to be as exhaustive as possible. Moreover, as can be seen in the titles of the volumes themselves, the text is written and published in Spanish.³ This choice is very significant and would show that Ledesma’s intention was not only to write a scientific treatise on morals, but also to make it available to as many people as possible, without the mediation of the Latin language. Ledesma’s goal is evident by the introduction to the work, in which he writes “it has seemed to me to be necessary on this occasion to bring out this summa in Romance, for two reasons ...: so that all the faithful may know the fundamentals very well and ... so that they may know them with a certain politeness and not grossly” (Ledesma, 1598, letter to the reader). Within this framework, Ledesma devotes much space to the topic of justice, its roots, and its fundamental meanings.

The aim of this chapter is to show, in an expository way and following step by step the ideas contained in the pages of the *Summa*, how the Dominican Ledesma deals with the concept of justice and, at the same time, how he attributes to moral action the dependence of that concept, opening to the ideas of dignity and taking care of others. For this purpose, some sections of the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth treatises of the second part of the *Summa*, entitled respectively *Iusticia*, *Iusticia legal*, *Iusticia distributiva*, *Iusticia commutativa*, will be taken into account, focusing on legal and distributive justice and leaving aside the commutative one, too intricate in examples. Simultaneously to this reconstruction, the words of Thomas Aquinas will be added to Ledesma’s remarks. Aquinas’s texts expand and confirm Ledesma’s theories and demonstrate, on the other hand, his gratitude and loyalty to his greatest inspirer.

² The proper name is *Primera y Segunda parte de la Suma* (Salamanca: Ioannes et Andreas Renaut, 1598). Hereafter *Summa*. The first volume has 1,286 pages, while the second 688, both in double column.

³ The text will be edited a few decades later in Latin as *Theologia moralis* (Cologne, 1630).

1 Function and Meaning of Justice

The primary meaning of justice is introduced by Ledesma in the fifth treatise, titled *De la virtud de Iusticia general y en comun*. This title recalls the traditional Thomistic distinction of the concepts studied in the first instance “in general” and “in common,” as an indirect confirmation of the filiation to which Ledesma belongs. In the lines that follow the title, almost as a subtitle, Ledesma writes that “this treatise is greatly necessary for customs. First, because Justice is one of the principal moral virtues, and also because in the Republic it is one of the things that are most used.”⁴

Ledesma’s consideration brings up three important points to comment on. The first concerns the need to speak of justice. This need is not linked to a rhetorical-political exercise or to a legal requirement, but acts on a social background. Justice, in fact, allows us to regulate customs, that is, to guide human beings transversally throughout their lives in the relationship between themselves and between them and institutions. This, in addition to the fact that the text is written in Spanish and not in Latin, proposes it as a tangible point of reference for those who seek an authentic understanding of justice and its meaning.

Moreover, and this is the second point to note, the path of justice is one of the most widely used in democratic contexts such as those of the republic. In this context, in fact, the entire population is responsible for its own behaviour and, by virtue of this, justice is proposed as the custom that makes it possible to evaluate and weigh these same behaviours. Justice, then, is not an imposition, but an objective evaluation of the acts performed by a social group that underlies a given institution (family, work, state, etc.).

As a consequence of this point, the third point arises, linked to the intrinsic status of justice as applied to the republic, where the customs of the population are “correctly” guided. Justice is a virtue and, beyond all possible speculation, it is a virtue in the Aristotelian-Thomistic sense of the term. Only by accepting this sense will it be possible to advance along the path that leads to the right direction of customs.

Having traced the fundamental line of the path of justice, Ledesma continues his treatise in a very systematic way and, given its clear and explanatory order, I will follow it step by step so that the Dominican’s objective can be seen immediately. Ledesma divides the fifth treatise of the *Summa* into two parts: the first deals with the definition of the essence and nature of justice in

⁴ Ledesma, *Summa*, 139.

general, while the second asks whether it is possible to divide justice into “sub-types” of justice.

Regarding the first part, Ledesma proposes four conclusions:

- justice is nothing else, but a constant and perpetual will, which gives each one that to which he has a right ... The definition has three or four words;
- properly and strictly speaking, the virtue of justice is ordered to another, and not to oneself;
- justice is true virtue;
- justice is in the will as in its own subject.

In the first conclusion, Ledesma uses the most precise and passionate words, while showing his gratitude and closeness to tradition and to his teachers. Justice thus understood is the result of the continuous reflection on masters such as Thomas Aquinas, Domingo de Soto, Pedro de Aragón, Luis de Molina, and Domingo Báñez, who were indirectly recalled by the Dominican as sources of his idea of justice. Through the union of the theories of these masters, Ledesma teaches, it is possible to account for the precise meaning of the conclusion. He argues that it can be analysed by means of the content it carries within itself.

The first word to be analysed is ‘will.’ This term indicates an innate need of the human being to tend towards something and an innate desire to achieve it. This will have the characteristic of being ‘perpetual’ because, as Ledesma argues, the acting soul must always be ‘rigged,’ i.e., ready to move according to the will that distinguishes each action. Man, therefore, is not a passive being, who suffers what surrounds him, but actively interacts with it, and does so through the ‘rigged’ soul that moves by ‘will.’ In this way, however, it is not guaranteed that the action is actually carried out in accordance with justice, for the disposition of the mind is not enough. The will, indeed, must be ‘constant,’ that is, it must be determined and move to action continuously, without weakness or justification. Justice can be pursued in action only with application and determination. Only in this way can the goal of justice, which is to give to each his due, be achieved. Ledesma’s thought, which pursues a criterion of merit linked to the good faith of the agents and their application in the performance of a complete action, attributes to justice the role of allocator of the results of that action. Justice, in the first place, does not regulate, but evaluates.

This determination of justice is supported by the words of Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae*, which also represents the ultimate and main source of reference for Ledesma. Aquinas, in fact, holds that it is possible to say thus, that justice is *habitus secundum quem aliquis constanti et perpetua voluntate ius suum*

unicuique tribuit.⁵ Justice, also for Aquinas, refers to the exercise of the perpetual and constant will that every human being possesses and exercises by virtue of his possession as a habit of Aristotelian memory. Ledesma himself, in this part of the text, refers to Aquinas on the fundamental characteristics of justice. Giving what is just to each person means first of all that justice cannot be something relative or changeable with respect to the operational conditions in which it is carried out. Aquinas is clear about this when he writes that “it requires to be voluntary, stable, and firm [...] Hence the definition of justice mentions first the ‘will,’ in order to show that the act of justice must be voluntary; and mention is made afterwards of its ‘constancy’ and ‘perpetuity’ in order to indicate the firmness of the act.”⁶

Having established the source of the definition of justice and its peculiarities, Ledesma goes on to discuss its extension, recalling that justice has the task of evaluating actions, but not of regulating them. For this reason, he argues that justice never orders itself, since it must evaluate something, in particular moral actions. This assertion is clear if one considers what happens when a human being performs an action. It must necessarily be relational and, as such, cannot take place in isolation from the institution of reference. Justice means acting according to the motto “to each his own.” However, the fact that everyone has his or her own is the starting point for affirming that justice works in human relations. Again, Ledesma’s main source is Aquinas, who points out that “since justice by its name implies equality, it essentially denotes relation to another, since a thing is equal, not to itself, but to another ... and consequently is only in one man to another.”⁷

Thus, here comes Ledesma’s third conclusion: justice is presented as a “true virtue.” In the first two he dealt with the definition of justice *ab externo*, that is, as an element that intervenes in the evaluation of the moral actions. Moreover, this is necessary for justice to exist as a virtue. Ledesma himself warns that justice by nature is a bearer of good deeds and those who recognise that it is also a guide for their life, as an immediate consequence will tend to do good deeds instead of committing bad ones: following the examples of Aquinas in *Summa the-*

5 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II 58, 1. Aquinas himself takes up this definition by interpreting Aristotle’s idea expressed in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, book V, 1129a1–1130b25 and which Aquinas summarises in: “philosophus ponit, in V Ethic., dicens quod iustitia est habitus secundum quem aliquis dicitur operativus secundum electionem iusti.” All the English versions of Aquinas’s text are issued by Alfred Freddoso on his website <https://www3.nd.edu/~afreddoso/summa-translation/TOC.htm>.

6 Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, 58, 1.

7 Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, 58, 1.

ologiae II-II, question 58, article 3,⁸ Ledesma states that “justice has a good deed and is ordered to it.”⁹

Justice, then, in everyday life is presented as a virtue that manages to guide the will in the performance of just actions and to evaluate them so that they represent the moral guide for the man who wants to perform a good deed. For Ledesma, “in general, and in common, justice is a good and virtuous habit, which rectifies the will, so that man gives to each one what he is entitled to, and so that he does not fail in this.”¹⁰ This passage contains all the meanings attributed to justice so far outlined by Ledesma, its structure and its consequences. The Dominican suggests that justice, having exhausted its task of “evaluating” moral actions, does not exhaust its usefulness, insofar as it succeeds in directing the will and “rectifying” it through its actions. Thus, if the human being follows the dictates of justice and allows himself to be guided by it by acquiring it as a habit, he will be able to understand what should be given to whom and how it should be given.

The operation of giving something to someone, given the multiplicity of actions that take place in the world, cannot be limited to a justice that certainly has in itself the task of evaluating and guiding, but leaves it in the abstract. Justice, thus defined, runs the risk of being a container as broad as it is empty, in which every action can actually be inscribed in the register of “actions according to justice.” Ledesma, aware of this problem, warns immediately that justice “properly and strictly speaking constitutes equality, but that it is very well divided into three ways.”¹¹ Only in this way, by studying the divisions of justice, will it be possible to understand how justice itself involves all human actions.

The second chapter of the fifth treatise has precisely this aim, to discuss the types of justice and to understand to which type each act is attributed. According to Ledesma, once again following the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition,¹² the “three ways” that compose it are “legal,” “commutative,” “distributive.” Ledesma writes:

[I]n the parts and the whole of a community, there can be three respects. The first is from the parts to the whole, giving it what it is supposed to be, and this is legal justice. The second is the respect of the parts to each other, giving to each other that which detains them,

⁸ Aquinas writes that “a human virtue is one that renders a human act good and that makes the man himself good. And this indeed belongs to justice.”

⁹ Ledesma, *Summa*, 139.

¹⁰ Ledesma, *Summa*, 139.

¹¹ Ledesma, *Summa*, 139.

¹² It must be remembered that, in any case, the original root of all Aquinas’s and Ledesma’s distinctions is Aristotle, in particular his *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*.

and this is particular and commutative justice. The third order is from the whole to the parts, distributing to each what is due, distributive justice.¹³

The criterion for the division of justice, as is clear from these lines, depends exclusively on the subjects to which it belongs. This would confirm, in the first place, the fourth conclusion of the previous chapter, the presence of justice in the subject that is said to be “just.” The first, legal, refers to all those cases in which the same individual commits actions against the institution to which he belongs. The second, commutative, is given in all cases where the acting subjects and the recipients of the actions are both individual individuals. The third, distributive, is necessary when the institution of reference acts towards the individual individuals that compose it. Thus, Ledesma has tried to cover all the cases that can arise when analysing justice within an institution: from member to community, from member to member, from community to member. This, in the idea that the institution functions as an organism in which the whole and the parts function in a mutually interdependent way, satisfies the Dominican’s needs by showing the internal division of justice according to a heuristic criterion that is more easily intuitive. Moreover, Ledesma concludes, we must never forget that each type has as much importance as the others, because “they have three *differentissimos officios*”¹⁴ and without one of them a part of the analysis would be lost. In this sense, Ledesma recalls Aquinas and his commentators, especially in defining justice as a human *habitus* guiding all acts, “as it is thought by them.”¹⁵

2 Function and Meaning of Legal Justice

The conclusions of the previous paragraph demonstrate the division of justice and show how, in relation to the acts performed, the one involving the individual in relation to the institution to which he belongs is called “legal justice.” Ledesma deals with this type of justice in the sixth treatise of the second part of the *Summa*, *De la Iusticia legal en particular, la qual llaman general*. The title does not seem to be random, since legal justice is a particular type of justice but, according to common practice and considering that most actions involve the individual towards the community, it is incorrectly defined as general.

¹³ Ledesma, *Summa*, 139–140.

¹⁴ Ledesma, *Summa*, 140.

¹⁵ Ledesma, *Summa*, 140.

- Ledesma articulates the discussion on legal justice along four conclusions:
- legal justice is a virtue that orders man to the common good and to the community;
 - legal justice is a different species from particular justice;
 - legal justice is one of the most excellent of the moral virtues;
 - legal justice principally is in the Prince and in the Governor of the Republic.

The four conclusions are not presented as a particular corollary of general justice, but as a well-defined study of that particular type of justice which guides man in action towards the institution. Again, the primary source of Ledesma's speculation is Thomas, in particular *Summa theologiae* II-II, question 58, article 5. Aquinas asserts that the law has the primary task of ordering "things toward the common good, this sort of justice, which is general in the way just explained, is called legal justice."¹⁶ So, considering this being ordered to the common good, the first conclusion is functional to understand the motivations that lead to connecting the individual's actions to the institution of reference. When a man acts, he never acts exclusively for himself, for every action contributes to the enrichment of the common good of the institution of which he is a member. Therefore, by his virtue, every action must be evaluated and proportionate to the social context in which it is carried out. Moreover, Ledesma argues that, since every individual is naturally inclined to seek the common good in order to safeguard first his family and then the rest of the members of the society in which he lives, it is not difficult to think of the practical realisation of this theoretical relationship between individual action *secundum iustitiam legalem* and the common good distributed to the community.

This is one of the reasons that leads Ledesma to explain the second conclusion, from which it follows that legal justice, although similar to particular justice, is completely different. The reason for this distinction lies in the fact that the particular and the legal have the same subject, man, but different objects. In the first case, in fact, the judgement *per iustitiam* is made by evaluating the actions of two individuals, so that their relationship is just and equal. In the second case, on the other hand, it evaluates only and exclusively the impact that the individual action has on the community and the common good that derives from it, "well and rightly."¹⁷

Ledesma, reflecting on the consequences of these conclusions, elaborates the third one: on a moral level the evaluation of actions by means of legal justice

¹⁶ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 58, 5.

¹⁷ Ledesma, *Summa*, 140.

is one of the most important virtues one can have. The statement is forceful, but it seems to be well justified. The Dominican argues, in fact, that the reason why it is necessary to affirm it derives from the relation of eminence of the common good to the particular good. Acting for the common good enables all members of the community to live in peace, because they are aware that no action taken by any one of them can harm their existence. Acting for legal justice means, then, working and acting so that everyone can live well. Ledesma does not intend to bring theoretically complicated moral questions into play or to formulate new social theories. It is intended to serve as a guide for all those who want to understand the world around them more deeply, to know with a certain degree of precision the consequences of their actions and to be aware of who will evaluate them and how. This view is already historically attested in Thomas, who in question 58, article 11 of the *Summa theologiae* II-II states that “the subject matter of justice is an exterior operation insofar as it itself, or the things that we make use of through it, is proportioned to another person toward whom we are ordered by justice.”¹⁸ Ledesma’s theory of justice, despite having Aristotle and Aquinas as its main sources, has everyday life associated with it as its most important source. For this reason, he himself argues, “all this has a little difficulty in Theologia.”¹⁹ The explanation of this difficulty has above all a social value, since men are educated daily to respect divine justice and, by paying attention to a different justice, they would encounter a series of misunderstandings due to different ways of acting. Following the dictates of religion and theology, in order to be well evaluated in moral action it is sufficient to act according to the teachings of the sacred texts. Why, nowadays, is virtuous moral action evaluated with different parameters than usual? Ledesma answers briefly and concisely, arguing that legal justice “is one of the most excellent moral virtues, with which our Lord can be greatly served.”²⁰ The theological difficulty is resolved by creating a relationship of dependence between right legal action and its usefulness in the theological field. Since even in theology moral action aims at the satisfaction of the common good of the community of believers, then legal justice and the evaluation derived from it is of great help for the understanding of the religious fact.

Ledesma’s three conclusions show the existence of three common characteristics in legally evaluated action: individual, community, individual action aiming at the common good. The next step in the Dominican’s argument is to under-

¹⁸ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 58, 11.

¹⁹ Ledesma, *Summa*, 140.

²⁰ Ledesma, *Summa*, 141.

stand whether there is a hierarchy among these three characteristics or whether they are of equal importance but act by virtue of an ordered vision that guides them. In other words, does anyone understand better than others how legal justice works? Ledesma, in his fourth conclusion, states that the prince or governor of the republic are the figures who know the ways in which legal justice is applied, in order to preserve the well-being of individuals and communities. The Dominican's words are enlightening: "the Prince and the Governor are principally concerned with the common good and ... all are obliged to look after the common good, but more particularly the Princes and Governors of the Republics."²¹ Two arguments can be deduced from this passage of the *Summa*: the first is that those who administer are more aware than others of the needs of the community over which they preside and, consequently, know how the common good is to be achieved; the second, and more important, is that the governors of the republic, as Ledesma defines them, have no power of decision over the common good, but are themselves bound to observe the prescriptions of justice and must limit themselves only to ensuring that the actions of the community of reference are actually directed towards the realisation of the common good. They are "guardians," not judges. Thus, with these words Ledesma dispels any doubt about the possible authoritarian drifts of the administrators of the *res publica*, putting forward hypotheses of democratic government and, in any case, exclusively oriented towards satisfying the obligations linked to acting for the common good.

This discussion of government, as framed by Ledesma, seems to have a pedagogical rather than political echo. For this reason, the implicit source used here could be Aquinas's *De regno*, a political work characterised by an evident pedagogical substratum. This work has the intention of directing those responsible for the *res publica* towards a government marked by the will to achieve the common social good. In *De regno*, Ledesma seems to find the pedagogical justification that allows him to affirm the primacy of the common social good over the rest of the objectives that a governor may have. In this sense, the words Aquinas uses in Chapter II of Book I of *De regno* are illuminating:

If, therefore, a community of free men is ordered by a ruler in such a way as to secure the common good, such rule will be right and just inasmuch as it is suitable to free men. If, however, the government is directed not towards the common good but towards the private good of the ruler, rule of this kind will be unjust and perverted.²²

²¹ Ledesma, *Summa*, 141.

²² Thomas Aquinas, *Political Works*, ed. R. W. Dyson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 11.

Any deviation, writes Ledesma in a correspondent way to the Aquinas one, “is found in the Prince or Governor of the Republic, and less principally in the individuals of the Republic.”²³ If the republic malfunctions in this sense, the responsibility is attributed to its governors alone. In fact, one of the extreme consequences lies in the fact that “they can commit mortal sin against the virtue of legal Justice ..., establishing iniquitous laws, which are pernicious to the common good.”²⁴ The community, represented by its governor, must therefore ensure the survival of its members by following the rules of the common good and in accordance with the dictates of legal justice. Then, distributive justice comes into play, as the subject of the seventh treatise of the second part of *Summa*.

3 The Role and Meaning of Distributive Justice

The treatise on distributive justice, in comparison with the two previous ones, is less easy to cover, as it has a length of fifty-three pages and an attitude much more oriented towards the discussion of practical cases, continuously supported by the theory of reference.

Ledesma returns to the need to study justice and also at the beginning of the treatise he adds again to the previous definitions that “this is very necessary for customs.”²⁵ Justice, therefore, besides being one of the main moral virtues through which man can define his own behaviours, is very functional to the structure of government, since it seems to be, according to Ledesma, one of the most used tools to guarantee its functioning. But, while legal justice makes it possible to decide how citizens construct the relations of mutual force that are established within the state, it is more difficult to understand how to give each of them their own “reward” for their behaviour. Again, other questions arise: how is freedom and a truly free society possible? Who decides and who guarantees, within the state, what is right and how it should be distributed? It is distributive justice that comes into play here. Of this particular type of justice, Ledesma at the beginning of the treatise provides four types of definitions, progressive from the point of view of their theoretical depth.²⁶

Distributive justice is that which orders the common good, for individuals; the first definition of justice is very concise and clearly defines the field of dis-

²³ Ledesma, *Summa*, 141.

²⁴ Ledesma, *Summa*, 141.

²⁵ Ledesma, *Summa*, 143.

²⁶ The source of these definitions, as also explicitly indicated by Ledesma, is Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, 61.

tributive justice, which is precisely that of the distribution of the common good to individual citizens. This is because the good of the state, which absolutely prevails over that of individual citizens, must not be prevaricating towards them, but must be just, fair, precise. It is likely that this kind of definition is the same as that of justice in general and commutative justice, so it needs to be clarified. Ledesma thus introduces the second definition.

Distributive justice is different from justice in general and commutative justice. Unlike these two types of justice, distributive justice orders the common good to the parties; if justice in general is concerned with the “constant and perpetual will,” while commutative justice with the relations of force between individual citizens, distributive justice orders the former to the latter and makes it possible to determine how the common good is “assigned” according to the rule of “to each his own.” In any case, whatever the distribution process is, it runs the risk of not being meritocratic and thus of granting someone what is not his right, in relation to the concept of “referring to the common good.” For this reason, Ledesma needs to introduce a third definition.

Distributive justice distributes things that are not necessarily due, or that belong to the private citizen. The citizen has no vested rights, but has them according to their value and quality; the good secured to each citizen through distribution for the common good does not automatically declare the possession of the good for each citizen. Distributive justice is proportional and is based on the fulfilment of two requirements: value and quality. Each citizen, in fact, must deserve a certain amount of good, and must possess particular qualities if he or she is to be truly worthy of credit. However, this definition runs the risk of being somewhat generic and is open to multiple interpretations. Ledesma therefore proposes the fourth definition, which in my opinion seems to me to be the most adequate and the most interesting from a theoretical and hermeneutical point of view, on which I would like to focus more.

Distributive justice has the proper and particular role of giving to each according to his merits and dignity; this fourth definition is the most “dry” of the four, but it contains the greatest interpretative richness in itself: “the proper and particular role of distributive justice is to give to each according to his merits and dignity.”

The expression is very interesting and, although it seems simple, it deserves to be examined more closely and broken down into its fundamental syntactic components. The use of the adjectives proper and particular gives us the character of exclusivity towards what is relevant to distributive justice. With these two words, Ledesma establishes the scope of application of distributive justice. Scope is limited by the verb to give, which indicates the action of distributive justice. The use of this verb, instead of its synonyms, is not indicative of a particular

hermeneutical choice on the part of the Dominican. Perhaps the use of such a simple verb, rather than a more unusual or eccentric one, helps not to divert attention from the more important core of the expression under consideration here. Thus, it has been said that distributive justice has the exclusive character of giving, but given to whom?

To each one (*a cada uno*) is Ledesma's answer. This expression is more profound than we think. In Spanish, to realise this expression, alternative formulas could have been used, such as "todos," "para todos," "a cualquiera," etc., but each of them would not have given back the deep meaning of the expression chosen by Ledesma. "To each one" means to respect the singularity and uniqueness of each individual concerned with the remuneration of justice. The Dominican's intention is to show that distributive justice has no interest in treating citizens as if they were part of an abstract entity that annuls their personality. And for this reason he does not use "totalising" expressions, such as "all" and "for all." On the other hand, considering each individual as a single person does not mean diminishing him for his value, making him a small grain of any kind in the immensity of society; it also means making him a *unicum*, an individual who is so important that the application of justice for his benefit deserves to be considered in his individual being. Moreover, for this reason, Ledesma does not use the adjective any. Thus, it is clear why Ledesma uses precisely everyone to express the object of distributive justice. It now remains to understand how this type of justice arrives at this object.

Merits (*meritos*). This is the first element introduced by the Dominican to construct the relationship of proportionality between distributive justice and its object. The rewards and punishments attributed to the latter derive mainly from the merits he has earned in his actions. Again, Ledesma uses the term not by chance. In Spanish, in fact, there are many synonyms to express this concept. Just think of "derecho," "valor," "provecho." These three words belong to the semantic constellation of "having the right to something," but they do not fully express the meaning of deserving something. Acting as a social fact does not give man the right to possess something, nor does it give him the right to profit. Certainly, acting produces a value, in the sense that man by his actions is "ranked." This refers to the way he has carried them out and the results he has subsequently achieved through them. However, Ledesma wants to be more precise, he wants to assert that every man who performs an action is in some way assigned a just and proportional reward, which distributive justice is responsible for assigning accordingly. Giving merit, then, means applying distributive justice in a proportional way to the actions carried out by every man who comes under the judgement of justice. But there is more: Ledesma attributes to the merit achieved an even more "human" connotation, if one can say so. We

are dealing with a discourse that crosses the lines of jurisprudence and theology, but not for this reason should the discourse be based only on an “aseptic” background. Man, in reality, by the fact of being judged, acquires an even more precise role in society, since he is recognised on his own merits. In this sense, he is “worthy.”

Dignity. This is precisely the central point of Ledesma’s argument, which finally uses the term dignity, as if to conclude his definition with the element that most elevates and fills human life on earth with meaning. Distributive justice has the task not only to judge, but also to elevate, to compose a meritorious ranking that gives man the opportunity to feel worthy of living his life and to allow him to interact with others, conscious of his work. Dignity, here, is a beautiful word, which manages to encompass the whole tradition that investigates the ethical and moral state of human life.²⁷

Freedom is “really free” because justice, and especially distributive justice, comes after man has acted. Therefore, he is not overridden by the rewards and punishments of justice. On the contrary, someone may fear it and thus adjust his own behaviour before it is too late. In both senses, however, the consequence for society is that it will be truly free, because it will be composed of individuals who act fully in accordance with their own freedom and, for this reason, decide by virtue of their own ethical choices, without being bound by necessity to obey the established rules.

Ledesma thus succeeds in creating a discourse on distributive justice that has a triple value: juridical, because it sets out to show how respect for laws, both divine and public, should be; philosophical, because it gives an account of the ontological constitution of human behaviour in its ethical and moral components; theological, because it proposes a path that leads to salvation through the actions carried out by man in his earthly existence, contrasting the theories of predestination and recalling the cornerstones of the imitation of Christ as the highest moral degree of perfection of human acts. Legal justice and distributive justice together allow Ledesma to explain how moral action and its evaluation are the protagonists of the relations that are established between individuals and the community of reference. It remains to be understood how, within communities, individuals organise themselves among themselves and act *secundum virtutem iustitiae*. The type of justice that governs these intra-individual relations

²⁷ In support of his analysis, Ledesma cites Pedro de Aragón, Domingo Báñez, Cayetano, Juan Gallo, Manuel Rodríguez, Franciscus Silvestre, Domingo de Soto, and, of course, Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas.

is commutative justice, which occupies the eighth treatise of the second part of the *Summa*.

4 Justice between Dignity and the Care of Others

It seems clear that legal and distributive justice are two types of justice that, according to Ledesma and linked to the commutative one here not analysed, exhaust the discussion on the meaning of justice as a virtue for human beings, for institutions and communities, for the relationships that connect them to each other.

To return to the title of the contribution, if one were to look for a limit to human justice in Ledesma, one could conclude that perhaps it does not exist. He, making a moderate but precise use of tradition, manages to compose a series of treatises in which he succeeds in divulging all the problems related to “doing something well.” Ledesma himself does not pretend to set limits in such a discussion; however, he warns several times that he would have many things to say and that the limitations imposed by a text such as the one he is writing impose on him: “many other things could be said, but because it is *Summa* there is no place to say more.”²⁸ Therefore, if there is a limit, it would be that it is impossible for the author to discuss theoretically every aspect of the questions raised and to present punctually all the possible cases of their applications.

The text is presented as its author intended, i.e., as a moral text in which philosophy, theology, jurisprudence and their tradition meet to explain how men, through the knowledge of good and evil, can act correctly in the world and thus foster their earthly fulfilment and that of their fellow men. Man, however, is sure and knows what to do and this, in the existential perspective, makes possible for him the certainty of a fruitful present and the hope of a salvific future. And this Ledesma, in his other work only mentioned here, the *Tractatus de divina perfectione, infinitate et magnitudine*, will have the opportunity to treat in its entirety.

Ledesma, therefore, makes good use of the tradition that has come down to him. He is able to consciously reuse the texts of Aristotle and especially Thomas Aquinas, who becomes his main source. However, Ledesma’s innovation lies in detaching tradition from its purely theoretical status, managing to create a text that is truly expendable in society. The multiple cases of consciousness, although not analysed here, are not a corollary of the theory presented, but become an in-

²⁸ Ledesma, *Summa*, 141.

tegral part of it in the recognition of its complexity and non-absoluteness. Ledesma, for this reason, can be considered on the one hand an original interpreter of tradition, but on the other (also thanks to his choice to write in Spanish) a proud representative of those who in his time were preparing to definitively determine the concept of dignity, between justice and care for others.

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Ritva Palmén

Chapter 14

Hope as a Social Emotion in Late Medieval Philosophical Theology

Introduction: The Social Emotions and Hope

This chapter considers medieval ideas of hope and the ways in which the philosophers and theologians understood its relationship with the actual social context it emerged from. By highlighting the communal and contextual aspects of theories of hope, I categorize hope as a social emotion.¹ While the concept of social emotion is of course in itself modern, in this context it serves as a useful operational notion, which enables me to capture the specific set of emotions from the varied historical sources for further study and to analyse the social and dialogical formation of our affective life. The presumption is that, unlike other kinds, social emotions typically depend upon the thoughts, feelings, or actions of other people. These may be experienced, imagined, anticipated, or recalled at first hand or instantiated in more generalized consideration of social norms or moral conventions. Social emotions have a self-reflexive nature such that people become aware that a certain event or situation impacts their personal self-evaluation or welfare. The social emotions indicate how we understand ourselves and estimate our own value, show signs of philanthropy, and determine where we feel safe and whom we trust. They are also devices for influencing another's reactions as well as communicating one's own intentions and attitudes to others.²

¹ In recent years, the emotions have been one of the fastest growing academic fields in current historical research. The research has been typically interdisciplinary and open to new methodological approaches and theorizing. However, as Cohen and Stern have argued, the careful historical study of philosophical works on the emotions still requires more attention. See Alix Cohen and Robert Stern, *Thinking about Emotions: A Philosophical History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). While the initial work on the philosophical analysis of emotions has been done, this article is based on the assumption that there is still a marked lack of philosophical research, especially on the topics of social emotions.

² Shlomo Hareli and Brian Parkinson, "What's Social about Social Emotions?" (2009), research.haifa.ac.il (accessed 28 December 2020). For the social nature of emotions in the medieval context, see e.g., Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (London: Cornell University Press, 2006); Andrea Marculescu and Charles-Louis Morand Métivier,

The key assumption is that studying the role of socially motivated emotions, emotive structures and discussions of the individual's awareness of her own role and status in the community offer new unexplored perspectives of how medieval and Renaissance authors explained the relation between the individual and her community as well as that person's relation to herself. By taking into account such subjective emotionally related experiences as pride, shame, despair, or anger as part of the social play of gaining or avoiding social esteem or prosperity, medieval authors like Thomas Aquinas and John of La Rochelle build a rich imagery of the human being as a social animal who is highly sensitive of one's place in society. The analysis of emotions also reveals the role of the community in our psychological formation and the ways in which we depend on or trust others.

The emotion of hope might seem to be a surprising candidate for examining how medieval theologians understood the social nature of our emotions. However, the discussion of hope reveals interesting new aspects of how medieval authors give a prominent role to personal experiences, their evaluation, and self-estimation for premeditating one's future prospects. Hope is a future-oriented emotion and psychosocial resource, which directs our planning and sets our goals. Our estimation of external variables like time, space, and resources also has a strong link to our proneness to hope or not hope for something. Hence, hope involves complicated calculations of several variables, affecting our planning of our lives and expectation of our future prospects. We explore the nature of the hoped-for object, its distance from us, the difficulty of achieving it, and our own abilities and resources needed for achieving that object. However, hope is not just the personal emotional disposition of an individual in a given context. Often the community itself sets the limits and expectations for hope, guiding the individual to hope in a way that is appropriate and beneficial for the whole community.

The aim of this chapter is to examine how selected late medieval authors addressed the sociability of hope by taking into account their overall ideas of emotions. Hence, in the following, I will first examine the initial development of the various accounts of natural hope in the late Middle Ages by referring to scholastic theologians such as Radulfus Ardens (d. ca 1200) and John of La Rochelle (1200–1245). Then I will turn to analyse works by Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) that explicitly discuss hope and its relevance in social encounters with others. The last part of the article discusses Giles of Rome's (1243–1316) ideas of

how hope is related to the prosperity of the commonwealth. I have selected the sources of investigation in order to highlight both the gradual development of definitions of hope as well as to introduce different standpoints of discussing hope. The contributions of Ardens and Rochelle represent continuing systematization of the ideas of natural hope, with the stated emphasis of the social and communal context and its importance in building hope. In his original account of natural hope, Thomas Aquinas draws from his predecessors, but also exploits extensively newly translated Aristotelian writings of emotions. Giles of Rome takes a novel perspective with the stated aim of discussing the role of natural hope in political deliberation and education of princes.³

The chapter contributes to discussion of the medieval theory of emotions, aiming to highlight their composite and cognitive nature. Literary theorist and historian of emotions Rita Copeland has argued that neither medieval philosophical treatises written by authors such as Thomas Aquinas or John of La Rochelle, nor medieval spiritual writings were able to offer a pragmatic typology of the emotions. Rather, their purpose is teaching self-scrutiny and self-perfection, not communication and persuasion. She claims that scholastic theologians as well as spiritual authors neglected the cognitive causes of emotions, their objects, and social effects, all the aspects that Aristotle is concerned with in his *Rhetoric*.⁴ I believe that analysis of medieval ideas of the natural emotion of hope as composite passion, and its formation as part of a social process combined with the individual aim of self-moderation proves the contrary.

The philosophical study of hope in its medieval context is demanding. The medieval authors usually integrated discussions of hope into their larger systematic explorations of emotions. In order to comprehend the development of the medieval ideas of hope and its overall meaning in human life, we need to understand the role of hope within the unity of other emotions and how it is positioned in relation to them. Moreover, hope (*spes*) is an equivocal term during the Middle Ages. On the one hand, it is a theological virtue, but on the other it refers to a passion, or a feeling of sweetness directed towards future goods with some anticipation of fulfilment.⁵ Research on medieval ideas of hope has

³ This selection represents by no means a full account of medieval teaching of natural hope. Within the limits of one article, it would be impossible to present a full picture of medieval ideas of natural hope. My aim is to initiate a discussion of the sociality of hope, not to complete it.

⁴ Rita Copeland, "Pathos and Pastoralism: Aristotle's Rhetoric in Medieval England," *Speculum* 89:1 (2014): 122.

⁵ This is Albert the Great's definition in his *De bono*, III. v. 2, p. 205: "Ad id quod obicitur de spe, dicendum, quod spes etiam aequivoca est ad virtutem et passionem. Et secundum quod est vir-

been mostly interested in the virtue of hope, that is, theological hope. While I recognize that much of the discussions of natural and supernatural hope develop in tandem, sharing many characteristic features, my article is focused on exploring various ideas of natural hope, more specifically, its social and dialogical dimension. I will refer to theological hope only when I am interested in how social theological hope can be, that is when I refer to the potentially self-exclusive nature of hope or when the characterizations of theological hope enable us to understand important aspects of natural hope. Deliberations of explicitly theological hope seldom addressed the social aspects of hope, whereas the theories of natural hope allowed more extensive consideration of how one makes estimations and evaluates one's future prospects within the community.

1 Medieval Definitions of Natural Hope: Concupiscible or Irascible Emotion?

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, intellectuals wrote a vast amount of literature on emotions, created various taxonomies of emotions and discussed both their psychological and theological implications. Within their treatises, analyses of 'hope' appear regularly as part of lists of emotions or reflections on theological virtues.⁶ Peter Lombard considered the virtue of hope only briefly, but his definition of theological hope became foundational to the speculative study of hope. According to his standard definition, hope is "the certain expectation of future beatitude, coming from the grace of God and from preceding merits. Hope itself is preceded in nature by charity, or the thing hoped for, that is, eternal beatitude, since to hope for anything without merits cannot be called hope, but presumption."⁷

tus, agetur de ea infra, secundum autem quod est passio, sic est affectio dulcedinis rei bonae exspectatae cum aliqua praesumptione habendi." Reference in Nicholas Townson, *Thought about Emotion among Dominicans in Pisa and the Roman Province in the Thirteenth Century* (PhD dissertation, University of York, 2014), 171.

6 For a thorough investigation of the theology of Christian hope, see Jacques-Guy Bougerol, *La théologie de l'espérance aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles: Textes* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985).

7 Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae* (Grottaferrata, Rome: Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1981) III, d. 26, c 1: "Est enim spes certa expectatio futurae beatitudinis, veniens ex Dei gratia et meritis praecedentibus, vel ipsam spem, quam natura praeit caritas, vel rem speratam, id est, beatitudinem aeternam. Sine meritis enim aliquid sperare, non spes sed praesumptio dici potest."

The following theological speculations paid much attention to the question of the certainty and firmness of hope, asking how the virtue of hope can be certain and what this certainty could mean in Christian life.⁸ In addition, Lombard was interested in discussing Christ's emotions and virtuosity as well, asking if Christ possessed meritorious hope and whether human Christ would need such a virtue.⁹ These much discussed topics concerned mostly the theological virtue of hope, influencing later theological and philosophical speculations of hope greatly. Most of the studies on medieval hope have been interested in analysing theological hope, leaving the emotion of hope untouched. This is an unhappy outcome, since by integrating newly translated medical and philosophical materials dealing with emotions, several medieval intellectuals gradually created complex and intriguing theories of both natural and theological hope, which formed two parallel, often converging discussions.

The new ideas of emotions are apparent in twelfth-century Cistercian Isaac Stella's (c. 1100–1170) treatise *Letter on the soul to Alcher* (*Epistola de anima*), presenting an influential distinction into four subclasses of emotion adapted from the Stoic tradition. As Isaac maintains, joy and hope arise from the concupiscible appetite and are reactions to things that are considered as good and pleasant, whereas sorrow and fear arise from the irascible appetite as reactions to things that are regarded as evil or unpleasant. The distinction between the concupiscible and irascible parts of the appetite and various taxonomies of emotions according to these two categories plays a major role in medieval teaching of emotions, intellectuals being hesitant to determine whether hope should be classified as concupiscible or irascible emotion.¹⁰ In the first decades of the thirteenth century, Roland of Cremona repeats Isaac's position that hope arises from the concupiscible part of the soul, but also recognizes discussion which suggests that hope could be attributed to the irascible part of the soul as well, criticizing the proponents of this view.¹¹ The pressing question concerning the irascible things was whether they referred to something evil and bad, or more

⁸ For an extensive discussion of the certainty of hope in its medieval context, see Walter M. Conlon, "The Certitude of Hope," *The Thomist* 10:1 (1947): 75–119; "The Certitude of Hope" (Second Instalment), *The Thomist* 10:2 (1947): 226–252; Mary Michael Glenn, "Comparison of the Thomistic and Scotistic Concepts of Hope," *The Thomist* 20:1 (1957): 27–74.

⁹ For a discussion, see Marcia L. Colish, *Peter Lombard*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 499–500.

¹⁰ Isaac Stella, *Epistola de anima*, in *Patrologia latina* 194, 1878D, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1893). See the discussion about Cistercian anthropology and Isaac Stella in *Three Treatises on Man: A Cistercian Anthropology*, ed. Bernard McGinn, The Cistercian Fathers Series 24 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1977), 47–63; Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 227–229.

¹¹ For these developments, see Townson, *Thought about Emotion*, 149–162.

like difficult and arduous. These comprehensive and ongoing speculations of the sensitive part of the human soul paved the way for the more original and nuanced understanding of natural hope.

French theologian and early scholastic philosopher Radulfus Ardens (d. c. 1200) wrote an influential, but understudied treatise *Speculum universale*, presenting an exhaustive examination of virtues and vices, extending the previous treatises of virtue theories within its breadth and scope.¹² His theory of emotions and virtues does not really develop a new conceptualization of hope, but advances other related discussions, which were integrated and utilized in later conceptualizations of hope. First, *Speculum universale* cultivates both general virtue theory and philosophical anthropology further, offering a novel and detailed terminological discussion of the individual virtues and their relation to emotions. Second, Radulfus was interested in the social context of individuals and its major impact on people's moral behaviour. His original contribution lies in understanding the significance of the manifold conditions of individual human life, and the context in which human will and freedom work.¹³

Radulfus Ardens considers that passions of the soul are morally neutral as such, being instilled in human beings from the beginning of creation. He differentiates between two basic strivings in humans, namely a desiring appetite and a defensive or rejecting appetite. Radulfus refers to these two basic appetites of the soul by the term *concupiscibilitas* for the desiring appetite and *irascibilitas* for the defensive and rejecting appetite, hence revealing his adherence to the current philosophical tradition.¹⁴ *Concupiscibilitas* is the quality of the soul through which it is naturally capable of desire, whereas *irascibilitas* is the quality of the spirit through which it is able to hate. Hope resides in the concupiscible quality. While Radulfus uses somewhat traditional language, he posits criticism of these terms, revealing his understanding of the temporal dimension of our desires. He suggests that the more accurate concept would be *amabilitas* instead

12 See Radulfus Ardens, *Speculum universale*, vols. 1–5, ed. Claudia Heimann and Stephan Ernst. Corpus Christianorum 241 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011). Thus far, ten books of Radulfus's extensive *Speculum universale* (total fourteen books) have been edited and I am aware that his unedited writings likely contain much interesting materials that may be of relevance for the topic of natural hope and sociability.

13 See the references to *Speculum universale* in Stephan Ernst, "Die passions animae im Speculum universale des Radulfus Ardens Passiones animae," in *Passiones animae: Die Leidenschaften der Seele in der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Christian Schäfer and Martin Thurner (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013), 140–143.

14 See Ernst, "Die passions animae im Speculum universale," 144, where he points out that Ardens's use of the ending "...tas" manifests his dependence on the Porretan school and philosophical tradition, and contrasts with the otherwise common words *concupiscibile* and *irascibile*.

of *concupiscibilitas* and *odibilitas* instead of *irascibilitas*. These concepts make clear how our desires concern present things, but also extend to the future and past as well.¹⁵ The two basic appetites divide into several modes of appearance (*sequelae*) that follow from them. Thus individual affects arise from the basic loving appetite (*amabilitas* or *concupiscibilitas*), which are desire (*cupiditas*), hope (*spes*), competition (*aemulatio*), joy (*gaudium*), happiness (*laetitia*), and glory (*gloriatio*); whereas from hating or rejecting basic striving (*odibilitas* or *irascibilitas*), arise hatred (*odium*), fear (*timor*), fright (*detractio*), anger (*ira*), sadness (*tristitia*), and remorse (*paenitentia*).¹⁶ *Concupiscibilitas* strives for that which is judged by reason as good, whereas the *irascibilitas* or *odibilitas* wards off the bad.¹⁷

Furthermore, Radulfus differentiates between the inner and outer man (*exterior et interior homo*), claiming that they both have corresponding forms of *concupiscibilitates* and *irascibilitates* of the soul, duplicating the two basic striving forces. He refers to the natural force of the outer man as *concupiscibilitas sensualis* or *appetitus sensualis*, meaning the desire for what is pleasant to the senses. The sensual *irascibilitas*, in turn, is the natural power in the soul aiming to flee from what is unpleasant to it. Due to his distinction between inner and outer man, Radulfus Ardens assumes that humans have a double and parallel structure of emotions. The *concupiscibilitas* and *irascibilitas* of the inner man have their accompanying affects within the outer man. Hence, the *concupiscibilitas* and *irascibilitas sensualis* are divided into the aforementioned individual emotions as their counterparts within the inner man.¹⁸

The decisive notion of Radulfus Ardens is that the two basic affects as well as their various subspecies can complement and moderate each other, so that they are held in the middle between the vices and, by mutually protecting each other from slipping into excessive forms, these emotions are able to become virtues.¹⁹ In this scheme, fear is a counterpart to hope, with the aim of preventing

15 Radulfus Ardens, *Speculum universale* I, 41 (p. 47, 993 – p. 48, 1004). Note how, without any further elaboration, Radulfus mentions that *concupiscibilitas* is a quality of the soul whereas *irascibilitas* is a quality of the spirit.

16 See Radulfus Ardens, *Speculum universale* I, 44–45 (p. 52, 1110–1114; p. 52, 1125–1153, 1129).

17 Radulfus Ardens, *Speculum universale* I, 42 (p. 48, 1022).

18 Radulfus Ardens, *Speculum universale* I, 54 (p. 61, 1372–1378). See the discussion in Ernst, “Die passions animae im Speculum universale,” 149–150.

19 Ernst, “Die passions animae im Speculum universale,” 160.

hope turning into presumptuous claims (*praesumptio*). Hope, in turn, prevents fear from growing into despair and hopelessness (*desperatio*).²⁰

Radulfus describes the specific role of emotions as part of the development of the virtues and vices in detail. Neither desire with its various subspecies such as competition, joy, or happiness nor hatred or anger with its individual manifestations such as fear, horror, or mourning are inherently morally bad. Depending on how they are exploited, emotions can be used for good or bad, developing into either moral virtues or vices. The emotions themselves are not yet the moral virtues and vices, but morally neutral driving forces that man finds in himself. However, they are the basis and the prerequisite for virtues and vices, their ‘matter.’ Whether they become virtues or vices depends on their use and orientation, moderation by reason, free will, and man’s ability to act.²¹

In addition to his naturalistic theory of emotions, Radulfus pays surprisingly great attention to the social context in which the person lives, calling the changing circumstances of life as occasions (*occasiones*). Radulfus claims that these occasions have a major role in the formation of our affections into either virtues or vices. More specifically, occasions are the specific disposition of a person, the time, the particular place where the person grew up and lives, the parental home, ethnicity, the customary way in which people interact as well as upbringing, which either promote or hinder the moral development of a person.²² Remarkably, Radulfus writes that, if a person encounters multiple adversities within his life, he is more prone to commit vices and advance desperation. However, sufferings also produce perseverance, which strengthens our disposition to hope. Several changing factors within one’s life create both virtuous and vicious behaviour.²³ Radulfus’s interesting work does not offer a detailed theory of hope yet, but by exploiting terminology in philosophical anthropology, analysing emotions separately from explicitly theological issues and recognizing the communal and social aspects of the human being’s emotive structures he created room for new ideas of natural hope and its potential social dimensions.

The significant new stimulus to the medieval teaching of natural hope came with John of La Rochelle’s philosophical treatise *Summa de anima*. In this exceptional book, John presents a novel taxonomy of emotions, which he further elaborates in detailed classifications. Exploiting a vast amount of new material, he

²⁰ For the overall table of the virtues and their collateral counterparts, see the table in Ernst, “Die passions animae im Speculum universale,” 161.

²¹ Radulfus Ardens, *Speculum universale* I, 52 (p. 61, 1332–1341). Ernst, “Die passions animae im Speculum universale,” 152.

²² Radulfus Ardens, *Speculum universale* II, 22–41 (pp. 102–140).

²³ Radulfus Ardens, *Speculum universale* II, 40–41 (pp. 139–141).

developed the medieval theory of emotions extensively, introducing novel formulations of hope as well. Building on earlier thirteenth-century treatises, he repeats the main idea of how the emotions are acts of the sensitive motive power. Appetite for pleasure and self-assurance dominate the behaviour of animals as well as the sensitive level of human beings. Correspondingly, people have two commanding motive powers, the concupiscible and irascible, both of which give impulses to external behavioural changes. These are further realized by executive moving powers imbued in the nerves and muscles. While these emotional changes are automatic in animals, humans can control them by reason.²⁴

Both concupiscible and irascible powers are naturally inclined to react to certain kinds of estimations with corresponding impulses. Significantly, the concupiscible power in John of La Rochelle's theory commands acts through which a person gains pleasure, but the irascible power commands acts that are relevant for honour and victory.²⁵ All the emotions in his list of irascible acts are socially motivated, thus related to a person's understanding of his social status and its changes. The irascible acts are not strictly related to what is evil and bad. John of La Rochelle's taxonomy merely describes the reactions of the human being in different social situations. People tend to feel hope, pride, dominance, or ambition, for example, in certain circumstances. However, the underlining assumption in Rochelle's account is that people are highly motivated by their desire to move upwards in social rank and the desire for esteem.

As John of La Rochelle maintains, the irascible emotions are divided into two attitudes towards arduous objectives difficult to attain. These attitudes are strength (*corroboratio*) and weakness (*debilitas*) with respect to an object. The general reference point is individual's relation to the community. Acts of strength are essential for achieving good things for the person in a society.²⁶ These include eight active responses to their related social conditions. The two first

²⁴ John of La Rochelle, *Summa de anima*, ed. J. G. Bougerol, Textes philosophiques du moyen âge 19 (Paris: Vrin, 1995), II 101, p. 248; II 104–110, pp. 253–267. For further analysis of John of La Rochelle's account, see Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 230–236.

²⁵ John of La Rochelle, *Summa de anima* II 107, p. 257.

²⁶ While the social aspect is evident in irascible emotions, Rochelle thinks that some of the concupiscible emotions have social implications as well. For instance, he counts envy (*invidia*) and pity (*miser cordia*) as concupiscible emotions, but both are motivated by one's understanding of the differences between oneself and others. However, their aim is not to change one's own status, as they are mere subjective feelings arising from the acknowledgment of one's position and can be thus defined as other-regarding emotions. Hence, envy is an act of dislike regarding another person's prosperity, whereas pity is an act of dislike in respect to other person's troubles. John of La Rochelle, *Summa de anima*, II 107, p. 257–258.

acts of strength are ambition (*ambition*) and hope (*spes*), both of which are defined by being oriented towards future honour and excellence, that is arising from social status. Hope involves a belief that this rise will be achieved. Pride (*superbia*) and dominance (*dominatio*) are acts of strength that are oriented to the present situation and both involve downward comparison. Their aim is to reinforce one's social status by rising higher and dominating others. Contempt (*contemptus*), in turn, has an element of upward comparison, since it detests one's own inferiority, disregards one's superiors or regards them as of little value. Courage (*audacia*) indicates that one has a desire to meet the enemy with confidence that one is going to win. Even anger (*ira*) has its concrete social dimension, since it is the desire for revenge or punishment. The last act of strength in Rochelle's list is a surprising novelty, magnanimity (*magnanimitas*), which refers to lifting oneself up in order to exact revenge on others or punish them.²⁷

These acts of strength have their corresponding acts of weakness in social situations. The motive is to avoid arduous goods or things related to excellence. Poverty of spirit (*paupertas spiritus*) is the opposite of ambition while desperation (*desperatio*) opposes hope. The individual with poverty of spirit intends to flee high status and excellence. Humility (*humilitas*) opposes both pride and dominance; it is the love of one's humbleness. Reverence (*reverentia*) opposes contempt, since the reverent person regards other people's excellence as higher than their own and then withdraws to one's proper measure. Courage has three separate contrary emotions, which describe flight from evil: penitence for past evil things, impatience towards present evil things, and fear of future evil things. Rochelle emphasizes that all these irascible emotions mentioned in this paragraph represent flight from something good that is difficult to get, not from some good in general.²⁸ The idea that these emotions are related to changes in social status or understanding of one's own measure indicates two things. First, Rochelle considered that communal life involved arduous or difficult good things, like excellence or victory. Second, he understood that an individual's affective responses relate to the process of establishing one's place in the social hierarchy. Moreover, acts of weakness, including humility or reverence, are not treated as morally more laudable than the acts of strength, which embrace such emotions as pride or anger, and hope and courage as well. The underlying idea is that an individual judges that some things are easily attainable whereas others are difficult to gain, meaning that they are easy or arduous.

²⁷ John of La Rochelle, *Summa de anima*, II 107, pp. 259–260.

²⁸ John of La Rochelle, *Summa de anima*, II 107, pp. 260–261.

2 Thomas Aquinas and the Sociability of Hope

The thirteenth-century intellectual sphere is known for its reception of newly translated Aristotelian texts, such as *Nicomachean ethics*, *Politics* and *Rhetoric*, which started to circulate among the university theologians, exerting considerable influence on discussions of emotions as well. Following Aristotle's ideas that conceived people as social animals, the medieval intellectuals put forward detailed analysis of socially motivated virtues such as magnanimity and discussed social emotions such as compassion. Accordingly, Thomas Aquinas's moral philosophy assumes several psychosocial tendencies that describe people's sensitivity to their social context and the Aristotelian idea of humans as social animals. In the following, I will explore the social dimension of the formation of hope in Aquinas's psychology of hope, which incorporates the idea of an ordered estimate of one's resources and abilities based on one's previous experiences, showing how individuals are deeply sensitive to their social standing and moderate their behaviour based on their evaluations of others and themselves.²⁹

In order to understand Aquinas and his followers' ideas of natural hope, however, it is important to introduce his componential cognitive theory of emotions, which was highly influential during the Middle Ages. According to his theory, emotional responses and feelings are sources of information for rational decision-making and important for our moral behaviour, since the well-educated emotions support and maintain motivation for virtuous action. The componential theory separates four distinguishable elements in every emotion. First, the emotion has its cognitive component, a spontaneous evaluation that something positive or negative happens to the subject or someone else in a way that directly relates to oneself. This evaluation occurring in the form of belief or fantasy is a necessary condition of an actual emotion arising. The affective component is a subjectively pleasant or unpleasant feeling concerning the content of the evaluation. In addition, emotion has a dynamic component – a behavioural impulse towards action, and typical accompanying physiological reactions such as turning pale or changes in the heartbeat.³⁰

²⁹ I have also discussed the theme in my article "Comparing Oneself to Others and Estimating Oneself in Thomas Aquinas' Moral Philosophy," *History of Political Thought* 42:3 (2021): 414–440.

³⁰ Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 29, 37–39. As Knuuttila points out, only emotions proper involve judgements, whereas similar emotional phenomena have affective representation, but not judgements as their cognitive parts. For instance, animals may encounter affective appearance and then experience fear, which is a simple feeling, without actual evaluative beliefs.

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* offers some fundamental insights into the social aspects of emotions, shaping the following discussions profoundly. *Rhetoric* lists fourteen emotions, which the speaker should instigate and exploit in order to persuade the audience in a given case. While this list excludes hope, Aristotle addresses the emotion of hope and its role in human life when he speaks of the characteristic behaviour of young and old people and the ways in which people conceive their prospects as they grow older. Young people spend their lives in expectation, with a forward-looking and hopeful disposition, which creates confidence and prevents fear. They have exalted notions, because they have not yet understood its necessary limitations; moreover, their hopeful disposition makes them think themselves equal to great things. Old people, in turn, live by memory rather than by hope.³¹

The social aspect of the evaluative part of emotion is substantial, since the emotional evaluative thought makes one see oneself or others as associated with oneself in a specific way, which is qualified as pleasant or unpleasant. This role of the feeling as an aspect of self-regarding evaluation is clear in Aristotle's ideas of hope. The second book of *Rhetoric* indicates that emotions involve thoughts about ourselves as subjects, which encounter encouraging or fearful things within our near vicinity.³² As Rita Copeland remarks, it is typical for Aristotle to focus on how emotions relate to other people and the social context, not to things. Unlike in his *Nicomachean ethics*, which discusses how we should strive for goodness and virtues as means of extremes, in *Rhetoric* the emotions are responses to other people and how emotions come through social behaviour. The movement of emotions from cognitive and physiological effects continually characterizes our social and psychic lives, the orator utilizing this knowledge of emotions by trying to invoke them according to his purposes.³³

Being well versed in discussions of theological hope, Aquinas was also aware that the ancient philosophers mentioned hope among the four natural emotions, not virtues. His mentor Albert the Great noted how classical authors such as Horace or Cicero referred to hope as a natural emotion, emphasizing how important it was to distinguish between different uses of hope.³⁴ In his

³¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, II, 12–13.

³² On social features of *Rhetoric*, see Copeland, "Pathos," 119.

³³ Copeland, "Pathos," 98. Copeland describes Aristotle's position as a non-normative, pragmatic, and phenomenological approach to emotions, which focuses on the analyses of the beliefs, attitudes, and intentions that actually cause affects in us and hence offer suitable material for the orator's use of persuasion.

³⁴ Albert the Great, *Super III Sententiarum*, xxvi.1, ed. A. Borgnet (Paris, 1893–1894), vol. 28, p. 490. Reference and discussion in Townson, *Thought about Emotion*, 164.

Summa theologiae, Aquinas makes it clear that as a natural emotion, hope is directed to the attainment of particular goods. When hope regards the universal good and God, it is not an emotion, but a theological virtue.³⁵

Aquinas takes a pragmatic approach to his analysis of natural hope. The adequate forming of hope needs to take into account the necessities of real life, the resources that one has, and, interestingly, the experiences of life. Ordered hope also includes an ability to evaluate one's own performance intersubjectively. In his *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas writes that the natural emotion of hope arises spontaneously when a human being encounters a good that is difficult to attain, but is still reachable. Hope is a disposition towards good things that lie in the future. The attainability of these objects is an important factor for eliciting hope; the attainment of the good objects involves some difficulty – objects within easy reach are desired, not hoped for. The difficult and arduous nature of the hoped-for objects confirms that hope belongs to the irascible faculty. While the objects of hope are difficult to obtain, a person must determine that the hoped-for reality lies within one's real or possible prospects. This careful calculation of right distance and the attainability of the possible objects of hope offers a good platform for comparing and measuring oneself against others and estimating one's abilities and resources. When someone desires something and then calculates that she can get it, she starts to believe that she can get it.³⁶

The desire for future good things is related to our well-being. As noted by William E. Mann, the connection between hope and self-love is evident for Aquinas; we are future oriented because we care about ourselves.³⁷ If someone has no interest in her hope, it is hard to argue why one would entertain any kind of hope, either theological or natural. Desire for some object is accompanied by the estimation of oneself, since estimation of one's resources is important in deciding whether pursuing the desired object is a realistic option at all. The individual is not moved to something that she considers impossible to get. She should be aware of her own powers, and then calculate whether it is possible to attain the object of her hope. Interestingly, animals have their internal pas-

³⁵ Aquinas discusses the emotion of hope in his *Summa theologiae*, I-II, 40 and theological hope in II-II, 17–22. The writings of Aquinas are available online at <http://www.corpusthomicum.org>.

³⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-I, 40, 1, ad 3: “Nam appetitus est principium motionis, nihil autem movetur ad aliquid nisi sub ratione possibilis; nullus enim movetur ad id quod existimat impossibile adipisci. Et propter hoc, spes differt a desperatione secundum differentiam possibilis et impossibilis.” See also *Summa theologiae*, II-I, 40, 1 co; *ibid.*, 2, ad 2.

³⁷ William Mann, “Hope,” in *Reasoned Faith: Essays in Honor of Norman Krezmann*, ed. Eleonore Stump (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 276.

sions of hope and desire as well, seen from their outward movements. If a dog sees a hare too far off, it makes no movement towards it, as having no hope of catching it; whereas, if it is near, it makes a movement towards it, as if hoping to catch it. The sensitive appetite of animals acts from a natural instinct, however.³⁸ Animals cannot change the objects of their hope, but strive for the good that they apprehend. Humans, however, can fix their goals, but change them once they make new evaluations.

Since the object of hope is a future good that is difficult to obtain but still within reach, calculation of possible future scenarios and risks, that is, defining the limits of hope, is essential. For Aquinas, something may be the cause of hope for two reasons: either it enables a person to do something, or it makes her judge that something is possible for her (*facit eum existimare aliquid esse possibile*). In the first case, hope is caused by those things that make the person more powerful, which means that someone who has riches, strength, or is experienced has good reason to be hopeful. In the second case, hope is caused by teaching and persuasion, both of which give one confidence that one has the necessary abilities and resources to obtain something.³⁹ The opinions of others matter, since other people's judgements and their views of us influence our estimate of our own abilities and set the limits on our understanding of what is possible for us.

Aquinas recognized people's inclination to compare themselves with each other, often manifesting itself in the sins of pride, vainglory, envy, and arrogance. However, social comparison also explains our disposition to feel shame or evaluate what objects are appropriate objects of hope and whether it is feasible for us to hope for the desired object. Within this attempt, our personal life experience is crucial since previous experiences direct us to calculate our future prospects accordingly. As Aquinas writes, experience generates estimation. Experience may be the cause of hope, since by experience an individual may acquire the faculty of doing something easily, and the result of this is hope.⁴⁰ Experience can be the cause of hope, but since it may lead a person to estimate that some-

38 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-I, 40, 3 co.

39 *Summa theologiae*, II-I, 40, 5 co: "Alio modo est causa spei omne illud quod facit alicui existimationem quod aliquid sit sibi possibile. Et hoc modo et doctrina, et persuasio quaelibet potest esse causa spei."

40 *Summa theologiae*, II-I, 40, 5 co: "Et sic etiam experientia est causa spei, inquantum scilicet per experientiam fit homini existimatio quod aliquid sit sibi possibile, quod impossibile ante experientiam reputabat."

thing is impossible for her, which she had previously thought possible. This is why experience may lead someone to feel despair.⁴¹

Hope has its corresponding vices, which are despair arising from sloth and presumption arising from vainglory. In his *De malo*, Aquinas discusses the differences between pride and hope, mentioning that both are related to desiring good things. Pride is an inordinate desire for excellence, whereas hope is related to a future good difficult to attain. However, hope can sometimes also be immoderate. Thence it is presumption, which pertains to pride.⁴² Echoing Aristotle's ideas in both his *Rhetoric* and *Nicomachean ethics*, Aquinas gives two examples of people who are not good in their self-estimations: young people and drunk men. They consider themselves capable, but in reality, they are unsteady and do not recognize their defects. In their inability to understand and accept their own limits, they do not recognize their powers; furthermore, they can also readily misunderstand the nature of the object they hope for. Consequently, they suffer from false hope, ironically named *bona spes*, the irrational belief they can gain a desired object. In general, all foolish and thoughtless people attempt everything and are full of hope. Hope is rational only if one calculates that it is wise to desire this good at this time.⁴³ An appropriate hope is the result of successful balancing between humility and magnanimity; namely, hope needs humility to estimate one's potential truthfully, not exaggerate it. If we overestimate our own powers, it is likely that we will discard the help of God, which is the very foundation of the theological virtue of hope.⁴⁴

The significant role of other people in forming hope becomes clear when Aquinas discusses the assistance of others and its impact on hope. Simple hope refers to the situation where the person himself regards his powers as suf-

41 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-I, 40, 5 co: "Sed per hunc modum experientia potest etiam esse causa defectus spei. Quia sicut per experientiam fit homini existimatio quod aliquid sibi sit possibile, quod reputabat impossibile; ita e converso per experientiam fit homini existimatio quod aliquid non sit sibi possibile, quod possibile existimabat."

42 Thomas Aquinas, *De malo* 8, 3, rp 1: "Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod superbia est appetitus inordinatus excellentiae. Sic autem se habet spes ad bonum arduum futurum, sicut se habet desiderium ad bonum absolute sumptum. Unde manifestum est quod superbia est principaliter circa spem, quae est passio irascibilis: nam et praesumptio, quae est inordinata spes, maxime videtur ad superbiam pertinere."

43 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-I, 40, 6 co: "Et similiter dicendum ad secundum, quod iuvenes et ebrii habent quidem infirmitatem secundum rei veritatem, sed secundum eorum existimationem, habent potestatem; quia suos defectus non cognoscunt." See the analysis by Robert Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of Summa Theologiae, 1a2ae 22–48* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 223–225.

44 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, 21, 1 co; Miner, *Thomas Aquinas*, 228.

ficient to obtain the object of hope, producing confidence. However, sometimes an individual may regard his own resources as insufficient and require other people's assistance in pursuing the object of hope. While the psychological mechanism of hope stays the same, Aquinas calls the latter disposition expectation (*expectare*).⁴⁵ Hope is thoroughly social in the sense that one's immediate acquaintances and their possible resources have an effect on estimating what is possible to hope for. This is because a thing is possible for an agent not only through his own power but also through the power of others. Aquinas argues in his commentary on *Nicomachean ethics* that things done by friends are enumerated among those possible because what our friends do is done in some way by us.⁴⁶ A person may extend her capacities through different forms of co-operation and hence broaden the range of possible objects of hope. Friendships are among the most important avenues for extension of resources and hope.⁴⁷

Interestingly, the help of others does not contribute anything new to the act of hope; it does not boost energy for the tendency, nor add certitude to the result. The distinction between the simple hope and expectation is essential for Aquinas's definition of the theological virtue of hope as expectant hope. The object of theological hope is beyond the powers of the subject, forcing him to look for the assistance which would make the object possible. If and when the object is potentially attainable, one is able to hope for it with confidence, that is, hope is strengthened by strong opinion. This firm opinion can be based on someone's promise, or may mean the hope of having something because of what we have observed in ourselves or others. However, the object must be possible or probable, but not necessarily certain.⁴⁸ Concerning theological hope, God assists Christians to hope for eternal salvation with certainty. The efficacy of divine help does not destroy hope, however, adding a new motive of confidence, so that hope makes us tend towards God as a certain good or end to be obtained and as an effective help in assisting.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, 40, 2, ad 1.

⁴⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Ethica*, 3.8, 477. See the discussion in Daniel Schwartz, *Aquinas on Friendship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 148, 153.

⁴⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, 17, 1 co: "obiectum spei est bonum futurum arduum possibile haberi. Possibile autem est aliquid nobis dupliciter, uno modo, per nos ipsos; alio modo, per alios; ut patet in III Ethic." Robert Miner speculates on Aquinas's theory of hope further by formulating a practical maxim: if you want another person to love you, do something that gives them hope. Miner, *Thomas Aquinas*, 226.

⁴⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, 120, 6, ad 3; *Summa theologiae*, I-II, 67, 4, ad 3. For discussion, see Mary Michael Glenn, "Comparison," 35–36.

⁴⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, 17, 6 ad 3. Glenn, "Comparison," 46.

The idea of interested hope is theologically important, since it highlights the personal dimension between the individual and God. Aquinas is clear about the fact that if we refer to hope in an absolute way, the object of hope is always something arduous and pertains only to the person who hopes. Since hope regards one's own good directly and not that which pertains to another, it is a self-interested virtue. Yet, Aquinas admits the social dimension even within theological hope. If we presume the union of love between people, an individual may hope for and desire something for another person, as for himself. Accordingly, the individual can hope for another's eternal life inasmuch as he is united with him by love with the virtue of charity.⁵⁰

Hope is by no means just a mode of wishful thinking for Aquinas, but has concrete effects on a person's life and actions. Hope encourages the individual to action by making it more intense for two reasons. First, if we consider the hoped-for object as difficult but possible, our attention rouses and we are more intent on our actions. Secondly, hope causes pleasure, which is conducive to action.⁵¹ The will, i.e., the rational part of our appetite, turns into pursuit mode only in those cases when it considers that the goal is falling within its power. In order to act, the individual needs this kind of movement of the will, not merely judgement of the goodness of the object. Hope enables us to switch from desire to pursuit (*prosecutio*).⁵² The hope makes us audacious, prompting us to regard victory as possible for us, either because of our own powers or with the help of others.⁵³ The emotion of hope and its social dimension is thence essential for our overall well-being, estimation of our capacities, and planning for the future. A person's estimate of the current situation, evaluation of one's abilities, and the subsequent appraisals of what one is capable of doing have a distinct bearing on one's behaviour. The hopeful person calculates the increase in her resources and sets high goals for herself. In fact, the principal exterior effect of hope is activity. Hope causes pleasure, which in itself quickens activity.

3 Giles of Rome: The King's Communal Hope

Giles of Rome was an influential Dominican scholastic at the University of Paris and later Bishop of Bourges, where he died in 1316. During his lifetime, Giles composed a vast number of treatises on theology and philosophy, but also par-

⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, 17, 3 co.

⁵¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, 40, 8 co.

⁵² Schwartz, *Friendship*, 148.

⁵³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-I, 45, 3, co.

ticipated actively in the political events of the time.⁵⁴ While much of Giles's theological and philosophical thinking relies on Thomas Aquinas's works, his writings show that he was an innovative philosopher as well, exploiting new materials and creating novel ideas.⁵⁵ Giles was one of the first medieval intellectuals who composed a complete commentary on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, linking it to both logic and moral philosophy.⁵⁶ He also wrote a widely disseminated political treatise, *De regimine principum* (On the Government of Princes), manifesting his interest in secular issues. Unlike his predecessors, Giles was keen to deliberate on the earthly government, asking how it could best promote the common good of society. With numerous copies and translations, this treatise had a major impact on later political thought in the Middle Ages and beyond.⁵⁷

Giles deliberates on the emotion of hope on several occasions, reflecting on hope as one of the natural emotions, but also discussing it as one of three theological virtues. While the use and role of hope differs greatly within these two discourses, they also share some of their characteristics. As the following analyses show, natural hope is highly sensitive to social context and encounters with other people. Theological hope, however, is a personal and intimate Christian virtue, where the soul disposes itself to hope for eternal salvation and seeing the invisible God without any considerations of social relations or encounters with other people. Yet, within both these instances, hope is typically an arduous disposition and predisposed to future good things.⁵⁸

54 Giles also wrote biblical annotations and commented on Peter Lombard's four books on the *Sentences*, showing familiarity with the more traditional topics as well. For a general introduction to Giles's thinking and works, see Roberto Lambertini, "Giles of Rome," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2019 edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/giles/>.

55 For the similarities and differences between the views of emotions in Thomas Aquinas and Giles of Rome, see Constantino Marmo, "'Hoc autem etsi potest tollerari' ... Egidio Romano e Tommaso d'Aquino sulle passioni dell'anima," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 2 (1991): 281–315.

56 See Constantino Marmo, "Logic, Rhetoric, and Language", in *A Companion to Giles of Rome*, edited by Ch. F. Briggs and P. S. Eardley (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 217–220.

57 *De regimine* was translated into Middle English by the end of the fourteenth century, exerting great influence. See *The Governance of Kings and Princes: John Trevisa's Middle English Translation of De Regiminem principum by Aegidius Romanus*, ed. David C. Fowler, Charles F. Briggs, and Paul G. Remley (London: Routledge, 1997). For the impact of Giles of Rome on Chaucer, see Stephen H. Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry: Chaucer's Knight's Tale and Medieval Political Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

58 Giles of Rome gives relatively close attention to natural hope and its right kind of formation in a ruler's personal life, but repeats much of the standard ideas of theological hope in his commentary on Lombard's *Sentences*. Following Lombard's classical definition, Giles writes that

Giles discusses the classification and the definitions of the natural emotions both in his Commentary on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and in *De regimine*. In both these works, Giles presents a detailed taxonomy of emotions by enumerating twelve main emotions (love, hate, desire, abomination, delectation, sorrow, hope, despair, fear, hardness, wrath, and 'mansuetudo'), which he further distinguishes into the emotions of the concupiscible and the irascible parts of the sensitive soul. Like Aquinas, Giles departs from the standard system of emotions, maintaining that both hope and fear belong to the irascible part.⁵⁹ While Giles accepts the basic tenets of Aquinas's schematization, his ideas of irascible emotions are more original.⁶⁰ In his account, the irascible part includes six emotions, four of them relating to a future good or evil. In the first, positive instance concerning the future good, the person feels either hope (*spes*) or temerity (*audacia*); in the second, negative instance concerning the future evil, the person's emotion is either despair (*desperatio*) or fear (*timor*). In all these four cases, the person evaluates her probability of encountering the future good or evil. The two remaining emotions are directed toward a present good or evil, signalling the agent's attitude, which either seeks revenge in the case of anger, or, in the case of resignation, refrains from it.⁶¹ *De regimine* repeats this same taxonomy, but also puts forward a list of four principal emotions, already mentioned by Isaac Stella. The concupiscible emotions are joy and sorrow, whereas the irascible emotions are hope and fear. Giles defines hope as an emotion that tends to things that the reason evaluates as good and arduous.⁶²

In his *De regimine*, Giles experiments with his classification of emotions in a new context, since he dedicated this book to the future king of France, Philip – later known as Philip the Fair – with the stated aim of guiding the young prince to serve his kingdom optimally. This book also testifies that scholastic philoso-

hope is the certain expectation of future beatitude, coming from the grace of God and from preceding merits. Hope lies between desperation and presumption; with the help of hope we are patient and secure about our future salvation. In *tertium librum Sententiarum* (Rome, 1623), XXVI, a 2, res., 601–602.

59 Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum* (Rome, 1607), I, III, cap I, 153–155; *Super libros Rhetoricorum*, f.49va (Venice 1515, repr. Frankfurt am Main, 1968) (see the discussion of the passage in Marmo, "Hoc autem etsi," 289).

60 Giles comments on the irascible part of the appetitive soul deviates from the standard, reconsidering the principles of irascible passions, see Marmo, "Hoc autem etsi," 289–290, 305–307.

61 Giles of Rome, *De regimine*, I, III, cap. I, 153–155; *Super libros Rhetoricorum*, f.50ra, see Marmo, "Hoc autem etsi," 305–311.

62 Giles of Rome, *De regimine*, I, III, cap. I, 155: "Nihil est enim aliud spes quam tendere in aliquid bonum [et] arduum"; I, III, cap IX, p. 180: "Dictum est autem concupiscibilem tendere in bonum et malum secundum se, irascibilem vero, ut habet rationem ardui."

phy and teaching of emotions had a great impact on medieval political theory, reaching the princely courts and their discussion of good government. The tripartite structure of the book embodies three Aristotelian moral philosophical authoritative treatises: ethics, politics, and pseudo-Aristotelian economics. The first part considers the king as a private person, elaborating the list of virtues that the prince should possess and the suitable emotions of the future king. The self-government and moderation of emotions are essential for the ruler. Giles promotes the idea that the civil order requires a well-ordered and morally upright king to govern, and offers an extensive discussion of the king's moral virtues as fundamental requirements for good management.⁶³ Virtues such as prudence, temperance, justice, courage, continence, humility, truthfulness, and sociability are the major assets of the king. The quality and quantity of emotions of the king are markedly fundamental, since the criteria by which the king's actions are evaluated should be based on the emotions that supported them. The emotions themselves, rightly ordered and moderated, maintain virtuous behaviour. The discussion about the emotions is not a trivial issue, since it is impossible to be a wise and virtuous governor if one's emotions are chaotic.⁶⁴

In addition to the focus on the king's moral education and performance, Giles wishes to highlight the difference between people, their status, and the emotions they are thought to experience. As Giles points out, the king does not follow the same rules in moderation and ordering of the emotions as the common peasant. The king's individual self-rule is a bedrock for all other forms of governance and his virtuousness is fundamental for the moral health of the community, which is why the rulers have a special obligation to excel in their moral behaviour.⁶⁵

As with Thomas Aquinas and John of La Rochelle, Giles maintains that the majority of emotions are not good or bad themselves. Depending on the circumstances and the set of aims, the king could avoid or increase them, in good measure and control. He suggests that every emotion has a link to the corresponding behaviour, in the sense that a fearful king is unable to act or make decisions. The king's decision is just if and only if its underlying emotion is rightly directed to

⁶³ For recent surveys see Roberto Lambertini, "Mirrors for Princes," in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 791–797; Roberto Lambertini, "Political Thought," in *A Companion to Giles of Rome*, ed. Charles F. Briggs (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 255–274.

⁶⁴ See Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry*, 30–34, including the references to *De regimine*.

⁶⁵ Janet Coleman describes how Aristotle's *Rhetoric* determines the substance and structure of *De regimine*; see her *A History of Political Thought: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Oxford University Press, 2000), 64–71.

virtue. While the king shares the same emotional structure with other people, his obligation to direct others implies specific requirements.⁶⁶ Hope is a prime example of the emotion that the king should experience differently than the common people. Hope relates to desiring good things: the greater the good, the greater the hope. As the guarantor of the common good, the happiness of all, the king needs to be animated by hope in proportion to what is within his power. This needs estimates of one's powers and resources. Hence, two major moral assets of the king are humility and magnanimity. As Aquinas pointed out before, Giles argues that humility moderates hope, because a humble person does not hope too much or is overly confident. The magnanimous person, in turn, avoids fear and vain hope, and does not fall into despair because of difficult things. Giles distinguishes four features that characterize the emotion of hope of the secular ruler. First, hope is about good things; second, hope concerns difficult things; third, hope concerns future things; and fourth, hope directs one to things that are possible and within reach.⁶⁷ If the ruler does not possess a good ability to hope, he is pusillanimous and unable to rule his realm.⁶⁸

These four criteria are those that Aquinas mentions in his *Summa theologiae*, but Giles's focus is on the ruler's emotions, since it is crucial for the well-being of the state and its legislation that the ruler learns to evaluate the goodness, difficulty, distance, and the possibility of the objects of hope. Because the ruler has more resources and nobility, he is more magnanimous than the common people, and should calibrate his disposition to hope accordingly. Giles highlights the communal aspect of the ruler's hope. The ruler has a great responsibility to his people, wherefore he should hear counsel thoughtfully and be careful not to lead his people into peril by reverting to false hope. His hope for future good leads the ruler to take counsel, making laws for his realm in order to achieve excellent goodness. While poor men who lack riches, power, and nobility may be forgiven for not achieving such excellence, rulers have no justification for pusillanimity. However, rulers need to beware of foolhardily taking on more than they can realistically accomplish and so threaten not only themselves but also their realm and their subjects. Hence, even though the ruler's capacities and resources allow him to set his hopes higher than others, he should be wary of the unrestrained passion of hope as well, not hoping excessively for things that are above his powers. Here Giles refers to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, which warns of im-

⁶⁶ Damien Boquet and Piroska Nagy, *Medieval Sensibilities: A History of Emotions in the Middle Ages*, trans. Robert Shaw (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 163–165.

⁶⁷ Giles of Rome, *De regimine*, I, III, cap. V, 165.

⁶⁸ Giles of Rome, *De regimine*, I, III, cap. V, 166.

moderate hope that young people feel, because they do not understand the real difficulties involved in deeds. Similarly, drunken people often lose their judgement and are overly optimistic.⁶⁹

4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the gradual development of various accounts of natural hope in the context of twelfth- and thirteenth-century philosophical theology. By exploring the different aspects of hope in a selection of medieval sources, I have demonstrated how medieval scholastic theologians considered hope as a profoundly social emotion. The sources show how hope is understood to be relative to one's social group and that a person should learn to find one's own reference group where accurate self-conception, estimation of one's abilities, and rightly moderated hope are born. In medieval milieu, this means that the hope of a peasant differs from the hope of a soldier, whereas a king is expected to feel hopeful on behalf of the whole commonwealth.

As the sources of my examination show, hope proves to be a complex attitude towards future desired things and events, combining emotional and intellectual elements. Hope involves estimation of the desired objects, our social resources, and our powers. Moreover, the definitions of natural hope interconnect with the discussions of irascible and concupiscible emotions and various taxonomies of emotions. John of La Rochelle was among the first to note that hope is about difficult and irascible things, whereas Aquinas discussed the impact of personal experience, persuasion, and education for our forming of hope, highlighting the importance of the assistance of others. Giles of Rome, in turn asked whether the king should pay special attention to his capacity to hope and hence carry the communal responsibility for his emotions. These deliberations all manifest how medieval intellectuals were deeply concerned with the social aspects of hope, paying special attention to the context wherein the hope is either born or deceased. The individual learns to hope according to her personal experiences and persuasion, similarly adapting the norms and expectations of her society.

69 Giles of Rome, *De regimine*, I, III, cap. V, 166–168.

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